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the Annotated Popular Edition of

SAPHO and PHAO

by John Lyly

Written c. 1582-84

Earliest Extant Edition: 1584

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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SAPHO and PHAO

By JOHN LYLY.

Written c. 1582-4

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Phao, a young ferryman.
Sapho, queen of Syracuse.

Ladies of Sapho's Court:

Mileta.

Lamia.

Ismena.

Canope.

Eugenua.

Favilla.

Trachinus, a courtier.

Criticus, page to Trachinus.

Pandion, a scholar.

Molus, servant to Pandion.

Sybilla, an aged soothsayer.

Gods and Goddesses:

Venus, goddess of love and beauty.

Cupid, her son, god of love.

Vulcan, her husband, the blacksmith god.

Calypho, one of the Cyclops.

Scene: Syracuse

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

With *Sapho and Phao*, dramatist John Lyly sought not to elicit loud guffaws from the audience through slapstick or vulgar humour, but rather to bring "soft smiles" to the viewers' faces, along with a genial delight. The plot explores what happens when members of opposite castes in society – royal and menial – fall in love, and the limitations that rank can impose on romance. Add in a generous dose of light comedy from a typical Lyly-esque company of servants and ladies-in-waiting, and some supernatural fun from two quarrelsome gods and a goddess, and the result is a good-natured play, well worth the reader's time to explore.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of this play was originally adapted from the 1902 edition of Lyly's plays edited by Warwick Bond, but was then carefully compared to the British Library's 1584 quarto, whose text can be found on the Early English Books Online database. Consequently, much of the original wording and spelling from this earliest printing of the play has been reinstated.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

Mention in the annotations of various editors refers to the notes supplied by these scholars for their editions of this play. Their works are cited fully below.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Bond, R. Warwick (ed.). *The Complete Works of John Lyly, Vol. II*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902.
4. Daniel, Carter A. (ed.). *The Plays of John Lyly*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1988.
5. Fairholt, F.W., ed. *The Dramatic Works of John Lilly, Vol. II*. London: John Russell Smith, 1858.
6. Bevington, David, ed. *Sapho and Phao*. From the *Revels Plays* series: Hunter, G.K. and Bevington, David, eds. *Campaspe / Sapho and Phao*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

NOTES on the PLAY.

A. Conflicting Quartos.

Sapho and Phao was published in two editions in 1584, but the question as to which is the original and which is the reprint is an open question. Earlier editors assumed the copy held by the British Library was the first, and that the other edition, several copies of which are extant, represents the reprint. Bevington,⁶ however, argues persuasively that the British Library version is the reprint.

We do not propose to address the issue here. Our text will be based on the British Library edition, whose text can be found on the web at any of the various *Early English Books Online* websites. Our notes will distinguish between the editions by referring to them as the "B.L. quarto" (for the British Library quarto) and the "alternate quartos" respectively.

Having said that, the differences between the two editions are few and minor; as a result, our comments on the variations between the texts will be few as well.

B. The Songs of *Sapho and Phao*.

The first editions of John Lyly's plays did not include lyrics to the included songs, simply indicating "Song" in a stage direction. However, a compilation of six of Lyly's plays was published in 1632 by Edward Blount. The Blount edition includes lyrics for all of the songs in these plays. While the author of the lyrics has always been an open question, it is generally assumed that Lyly was not the source – he had died in 1606; this edition of *Sapho and Phao*, however, follows the long-standing tradition of incorporating the lyrics of 1632 within the text of the play inserted at the appropriate locations.

C. Lyly's Long Monologues.

John Lyly regularly included in his plays prose speeches of 300-500 words in length. These protracted monologues have traditionally been printed as single paragraphs, just as they appeared in the early quartos. Unfortunately, trying to read and follow the trains of thought in such lengthy paragraphs makes for a mind-numbing experience.

As a result, we have broken up most of these speeches into multiple smaller paragraphs, separated by theme, to facilitate reading.

D. Lyly's Wacky Natural "Facts".

John Lyly's works are permeated with his famous style of writing known as "euphuism", whose key features include the use of parallel phrasing, alliteration, wordplay, and the incorporation of wild and unsubstantiated "facts" about the natural world (e.g., that eagles are never struck by lightning). Lyly borrowed or adapted many of these fancies from *The Natural History*, an ancient encyclopedic work compiled by the 1st century A.D. Roman Pliny the Elder, but also frequently invented his own.

The important thing to note about Lyly's allusions to the natural world is that he always uses them as analogies to help make a point about human behaviour and attitudes. For example, Lyly employs the point about the eagle never being struck by lightning to support Sapho's

complaint that she, a queen – and thus of comparable nobility to the eagle – should never have to suffer misfortune.

E. *Sapho and Phao's* Wordplay.

With the first line of the first Act – "*Thou art a ferryman, Phao, yet a free man*" – Lyly sets the tone for this play, signaling that *Sapho and Phao* will be filled with puns and wordplay of all sorts. While our annotations will identify some of the more interesting examples of Lyly's fun with language, we will forbear from commenting on all of it, and hope that you, the reader, will remain ever attentive to the ubiquitous wordplay in this comedy.

F. Acts, Scenes, and Stage Directions.

Sapho and Phao was originally published in 1584 in two separate quarto editions. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of this earliest volume as much as possible.

Words or syllables which have been added to the original text to clarify the sense are surrounded by hard brackets []; these additions are often adopted from the suggestions of later editors. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course choose to omit any of the supplementary wording.

Unusually for the era, *Sapho and Phao* was, in its original printing, divided into both numbered Acts and Scenes. Suggested scene settings, however, are adopted from Bond.⁹

Finally, as is our normal practice, some of the quarto's stage directions have been modified, and others have been added to the text, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. Most of these changes are adopted from Bond.

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Written c. 1582-4

Earliest Extant Edition: 1584

THE PROLOGUE AT THE BLACKFRIARS.

1 Where the bee can suck no honey, she leaveth her
2 sting behind; and where the bear cannot find origanum
3 to heal his grief, he blasteth all other leaves with his
4 breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us, that seeing
5 you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you
6 leave behind you a sour mislike, and with open
7 reproach blame our good meanings, because you
8 cannot reap your wonted mirths.

10 Our intent was at this time to move inward delight,
11 not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be)
12 soft smiling, not loud laughing; knowing it to the
13 wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed
14 with wit, as to the foolish to have sport mingled with
rudeness.

Prologue I: Lyly generally rehearsed his plays at the former monastery known as *Blackfriars* in front of a paying audience, before performing them before Queen Elizabeth.

Lyly's prologues typically followed a specific pattern of using fantastic analogies drawn from the natural world to help acknowledge the insufficient quality of the play, followed by explicit appeals for the audience to receive the performance with favour.

Lines 1-8 (below): Lyly worries that the audience might be expecting a broad farce, and, finding the play to be more refined, will be disappointed.

1-2: *Where the...behind* = a variation on Pliny's observation that if a bee loses its sting after stinging, but survives, it turns into a drone, and produces no more honey (*The Natural History*, 11.19).

2-4: *where the bear...breath* = Pliny mentions only that the breath of a bear is "quite pestilential" (11.115).¹³

2: *origanum* = term used for oregano and marjoram,¹

3: *grief* = injury, pain or suffering.¹

4: *like* = likely.

6-7: *with open...meanings* = ie. with hissing or other obvious demonstrations of displeasure find fault with the play, despite Lyly's good intentions (*meanings*).¹

8: *reap your wonted mirths* = "enjoy your accustomed hearty laughs."

9-14 (below): Lyly explains that his intent was to produce a play that is subtly delightful, rather than one which would give the audience great belly-laugh.

9-10: *move...lightness* = give the viewers pleasure rather than summon loud guffaws.

12: *counsel* = ie. good advice

13: *foolish* = ie. the ruder sorts.

13: *sport* = entertainment.

15-21 (below): Lyly further explains that the audience should expect *Sapho and Phao* to keep within the bounds of decorum: nothing vulgar or inappropriate will appear in this play!

16 They were banished the theater at Athens and from
Rome hissed, that brought parasites on the stage with
18 apish actions, or fools with uncivil habits, or
courtesans with immodest words. We have endeavored
20 to be as far from unseemly speeches, to make your
ears glow, as we hope you will be from unkind
reports to make our cheeks blush.

22 The griffin never spreadeth her wings in the sun
when she hath any sick feathers; yet have we ventured
24 to present our exercises before your judgments when
we know them full of weak matter, yielding rather
26 ourselves to the courtesy which we have ever found,
than to the preciseness which we ought to fear.

15-18: ***They were...words*** = allusion to the passing of laws in Rome that banned excessively immodest stage productions. The source seems to be Horace's *Ars Poetica*, lines 281-3;⁶ ***banished*** = ie. banished from.

16: ***hissed*** = hissing has always been the audience's favourite way of letting the actors know of its displeasure.

16, 18: ***parasites, courtesans*** = a ***parasite*** was a poor man who attached himself to a rich patron, receiving food and protection in return for flattering and otherwise serving his patron. ***Courtesans*** were high-class prostitutes or madams. Both character types feature commonly in ancient Roman comedies.⁶

17: ***apish actions*** = foolish acting.¹

17: ***uncivil*** = rude, impolite.¹

19-20: ***make your ears glow*** = ie. from embarrassment at the goings-on on stage.

20-21: ***as we...blush*** = Lyly hopes the crowd will refrain from passing along bad reviews of the play, which would embarrass the company.

22-23: ***The griffin...feathers*** = a bit of invented stuff from Lyly; the ***griffin*** is a mythical bird with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.¹

25-27: ***we know...to fear*** = despite the poor quality of the play, Lyly hopes the audience will receive the production with its accustomed politeness, rather than respond in a way commensurate with what the play deserves.

THE PROLOGUE AT THE COURT.

1 The Arabians, being stuffed with perfumes, burn
2 hemlock, a rank poison; and in Hybla, being cloyed
with honey, they account it dainty to feed on wax.
4 Your Highness' eyes, whom variety hath filled with
fair shows and whose ears pleasure hath possessed
6 with rare sounds, will, we trust, at this time resemble
the princely eagle, who fearing to surfeit on spices,
8 stoopeth to bite on worm-wood.

10 We present no conceits nor wars, but deceits and
loves, wherein the truth may excuse the plainness, the
necessity the length, the poetry the bitterness.

12 There is no needle's point so small which hath not
his compass, nor hair so slender which hath not his
14 shadow, nor sport so simple which hath not his show.
Whatsoever we present, whether it be tedious (which
16 we fear) or toyish (which we doubt), sweet or sour,
absolute or imperfect, or whatsoever, in all humbleness
18 we all, and I on knee for all, entreat that your Highness
imagine yourself to be in a deep dream, that staying
20 the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe
but to say, "And so you awaked."

1-8 (below): just as certain peoples, having had their fill of the finer things in life, are satisfied to lower their standards so as to continue to tickle their senses. Lyly hopes Queen Elizabeth will be pleased to deign to watch this poor play, when she has been used to being amused by superior entertainment.

1: *The Arabians...perfumes* = Pliny tells us that the people of Arabia are fond of importing perfumes from foreign lands (12.38).

1: *being stuffed* = their sense glutted.

2-3: *in Hybla...honey* = the town of *Hybla* in Sicily was famed for its honey.

2: *cloyed* = satiated, from having overfed on honey.

3: *dainty* = delightful, pleasant.¹

6: *rare* = excellent.

7-8: more invented natural history from Lyly.

7: *surfeit on* = become glutted from feeding on.

8: *worm-wood* = common term for absinthium, a plant which was proverbial for its bitter taste.¹

9: *conceits* = fanciful stories.¹

10: *wherein...plainness* = it was proverbial to suggest that one must speak plainly in order to speak the truth. Bevington sees these lines as Lyly's apology for presenting a play which "touches on sensitive issues...related to court politics" (p. 203).⁶

13: *his compass* = ie. a substantive circumference, with obvious playful allusion to a needle's ability to point to true north.⁶

14: *nor sport...show* = nor an amusement so plain or humble that it does not entertain at least a little bit.

16: *toyish* = frivolous.¹

16: *doubt* = suspect (it to be).

17: *absolute* = perfect.¹

19-21: with a clever analogy, Lyly hopes that the queen's reaction to the play (if she sticks around to the end) will be no worse than to simply say, "it is over."

19: *staying* = awaiting.

20: *vouchsafe* = deign.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

Syracuse: at the Ferry.

Enter Phao.

1 **Phao.** Thou art a ferryman, Phao, yet a free man,
2 possessing for riches content, and for honours quiet.
Thy thoughts are no higher than thy fortunes, nor thy
4 desires greater than thy calling. Who climbeth
standeth on glass, and falleth on thorn. Thy heart's
6 thirst is satisfied with thy hand's thrift, and thy gentle
labours in the day turn to sweet slumbers in the night.
8 As much doth it delight thee to rule thine oar in a calm
stream as it doth Sapho to sway the sceptre in her
10 brave court. Envy never casteth her eye low, ambition
pointeth always upward, and revenge barketh only at
12 stars. Thou farest delicately, if thou have a fare to buy

Scene Setting: the exact site of *the ferry* is unclear, but Bond imagines it to be located to be at the west end of Syracuse's Great Harbour, perhaps at or near the mouth of the Anapo River, from which Phao would carry travellers to the island of Ortygia, on which the oldest part of Syracuse was built (see Bond, p. 554).³

We have adopted Bond's suggestion that the entire first Act takes place at the ferry.

Entering Character: *Phao* is the ferryman. He begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy, in which he expresses a supreme contentment with his station in life, mean as it is.

1: note the typical Lyly-esque wordplay of *ferryman* and *free man*.

2: Phao's wealth and honour are comprised of his serenity and peace of mind.

3-4: *Thy thoughts...calling* = Phao is without ambition. *calling* (line 4) = rank, but also vocation.¹

4-5: *Who climbeth...thorn* = a double-metaphor describing the fickleness of fortune: any rise in status is tenuous (*glass* is slippery),⁶ any falling from grace or power painful.

5-6: *Thy heart's thirst is* = ie. "your desires are". = work, industry.¹ = noble.¹

= the queen of Syracuse.

10: *brave* = excellent.

10-11 = *Envy...upward* = those who are higher on the social scale have no reason to feel ill-will towards those on the bottom; their jealous eyes are instead fixed on their superiors.

11-12: *revenge...stars* = the ambitious direct their spite toward those above them.

12-13: *Thou farest...anything* = Phao considers himself to be living luxuriously (*delicately*)¹ if he has a passenger (*fare*) who gives him money with which he can purchase

anything. Thine angle is ready when thine oar is idle,
14 and as sweet is the fish which thou gettest in the river
16 as the fowl which other buy in the market. Thou
needst not fear poison in thy glass, nor treason in thy

guard. The wind is thy greatest enemy, whose might is
18 withstood with policy. Oh sweet life, seldom found
under a golden covert, often under a thatched cottage.

20 – But here cometh one. I will withdraw myself aside;
22 it may be a passenger.

[Phao retires.]

24 Enter Venus and Cupid.

26 **Venus.** It is no less unseemly than unwholesome for
28 Venus, who is most honoured in princes' courts, to
sojourn with Vulcan in a smith's forge, where bellows
30 blow instead of sighs, dark smokes rise for sweet
32 perfumes, and for the panting of loving hearts, is only
heard the beating of steeled hammers. Unhappy
34 Venus, that carrying fire in thine own breast, thou
shouldest dwell with fire in his forge. What doth
36 Vulcan all day but endeavor to be as crabbed in
manners as he is crooked in body, driving nails when

38 he should give kisses, and hammering hard armours
when he should sing sweet amours? It came by lot, not

whatever his simple tastes require.

= when there are no customers, Phao is satisfied to spend his time fishing; **angle** = hook, fishing rod.²

15: **other** = ie. others.

15-17: **Thou needst...guard** = a nod to the dangers, and concomitant anxiety, faced daily by any Renaissance monarch.

in (line 16) = from.

17-18: **the wind...policy** = a fierce wind can only be managed with skill and strategy.

18-19: **sweet life...cottage** = the poor are often less troubled than the rich.

covert = cover, shelter; the quartos print *couert* (ie. covert), but many editors emend **covert** to **court**.

20-21: a convention of the Elizabethan stage permitted a character to withdraw and observe another who has just entered, and even be able to hear everything the person says, without being observed him- or herself.

The employment of this convention was sometimes, as here, a bit awkward: after all, it does not really make sense for Phao to hide from a potential fare. As a matter of stagecraft, though, Phao's withdrawal allows the new characters to freely introduce themselves to the audience.

Entering Characters: **Venus** is the goddess of love and beauty; her son **Cupid**, a young boy, is the well-known cherubic god of love and desire.

In Venus' opening monologue, she expresses her utter disdain for her crippled husband **Vulcan**, the god who serves as the blacksmith for the rest of the Roman pantheon.

= unfitting. = detrimental, injurious.¹

= reside.¹

= ie. sighs of lovers in love. = instead of.

= in place of.

= common metaphor for passion.

35-36: **crabbed in manners** = ill-tempered, irritable.²

= according to **Homer**, **Vulcan** was lame from birth; but another popular myth told how Vulcan once took the side of his mother **Juno** in one of her many arguments with her husband **Jupiter**, enraging the latter so greatly that he threw Vulcan off of **Mt. Olympus**. Vulcan fell for an entire day before landing on earth (the island of **Lemnos**, specifically), laming him permanently.⁸

38: **amours** = properly love, love-making, or love affairs,¹ hence "love songs"; note the wordplay of **armours** and **amours**.

40 love, that I was linked with him. He gives thee bolts,
Cupid, instead of arrows, fearing belike (jealous fool
42 that he is) that if he should give thee an arrowhead, he
should make himself a broad head. But come, we will

to Syracuse, where thy deity shall be shown, and my

44 disdain. I will yoke the neck that yet never bowed, at
46 which, if Jove repine, Jove shall repent. Sapho shall
know, be she never so fair, that there is a Venus which
can conquer, were she never so fortunate.

48 **Cupid.** If Jove espy Sapho, he will devise some new
50 shape to entertain her.

52 **Venus.** Strike thou Sapho. Let Jove devise what shape
he can.

54 **Cupid.** Mother, they say she hath her thoughts in a

38-39: *It came...with him* = The idea that **Venus** was given to **Vulcan** to be his wife *by lot* is a fiction invented by Lyly. The original story seems to be that when **Juno** gave birth to the crippled boy Vulcan, she was so ashamed that she threw him out of heaven; raised by the marine goddesses **Thetis** and **Eurynome**, Vulcan grew up to be a skilled blacksmith. To get revenge on his mother for rejecting him, Vulcan built a special golden throne as a gift for Juno, which, when she sat upon it, released shackles which bound her to the seat. The only way Jupiter could win Juno's release was to give Venus to Vulcan as his wife.⁷

39-42: *He gives...broad head* = Vulcan is perpetually suspicious – with good reason – about Venus' carrying on with other men. Knowing that Cupid can help his mother get a paramour by firing an arrow into any man, which would cause him to fall in love with her, Vulcan provides Cupid with arrows comprised of shorter and blunter heads (*bolts*), with which an archer could stun or knock down his victims (usually hunting-prey such as birds), but not pierce their skins.⁵

belike (line 40) = most likely.

41-42: *he should...broad head* = metaphorically, that Vulcan would become a cuckold. The reference is to a *head* which was *broad* enough to hold the horns that were said to grow on the forehead of a man whose wife cheats on him.⁴

43: *to* = ie. go to.

thy deity...shown = ie. Cupid will get to exercise his supernatural powers.

43-44: *and my disdain* = ie. and also where Venus will get to make evident her low opinion of either Vulcan or Sapho, or both.

44-47: *I will yoke...fortunate* = Venus intends to reduce Sapho's arrogant pride in her ability to keep aloof from affairs of the heart, by causing her, with Cupid's help, to fall madly in love.

45: *if Jove...repent* = if Venus' father Jupiter (aka *Jove*) complains, he will do so to his own regret. Venus' point is that by causing Sapho to fall in love with another mortal, she may be thwarting Jove, who might want to take her as a lover for himself.

45-47: *Sapho...fortunate* = no matter how much Sapho is favoured by fortune, Venus intends to prove that she (Venus) is still more powerful.

49-50: the waggish Cupid indirectly suggests that if Jove sees (*espies*) Sapho, he will attempt to seduce her. He refers to the king of the god's penchant for taking on different animal *shapes* with which to catch his women. Note how all of Cupid's responses to his mother's instructions display a high degree of mischievousness.

= "shoot one of your arrows at Sapho."

55-57: *they say...arrands* = with various metaphors, Cupid,

56	<u>string</u> , that she conquers affections, and sendeth love	perhaps teasing, expresses doubt over his ability to affect Sapho, whom he hears has complete mastery over her emotions and passions. <i>string</i> = cord for keeping a person or animal under control, ie. a leash. ¹ <i>arrands</i> (line 57) = ie. errands, an alternate form. ¹
58	up and down upon arrands; I am afraid she will <u>yerk</u> me if I <u>hit her</u> .	= thrash, kick, or whip. ^{1,5,6} = strike Sapho with an arrow.
60	Venus. Peevish boy, can mortal creatures resist that, which the immortal gods cannot <u>redress</u> ?	60-61: the gods themselves are unable to avoid the effects from being struck by one of Cupid's arrows; so how can any mortal man or woman hope to do any better? <i>redress</i> = remedy.
62		
64	Cupid. The gods are amorous, and therefore willing to be <u>pierced</u> .	63-64; because the gods are such a randy lot, they actually like to be struck by Cupid's arrows. With <i>pierced</i> , Cupid means both with his arrow and sexually: ⁶ the lad continues to be sly!
66	Venus. And <u>she amiable</u> , and therefore must be pierced.	= Sapho is lovely or desirable. ¹
68		
70	Cupid. I dare not.	
72	Venus. Draw thine arrow <u>to the head</u> , else I will make thee repent it at the heart. Come away, and behold the ferry-boy ready to conduct us.	= ie. so that the arrowhead is aligned between the two ends of the bent bow, hence, as far back as possible: Venus wants Cupid to put all his strength into the shot.
74		
76		
78	Pretty youth, do you keep the ferry that <u>bendeth to</u> Syracuse?	72-73: <i>Come away...conduct us</i> = Venus and Cupid will take the ferry to old town Syracuse to enact their plan.
80	Phao. The ferry, fair lady, that bendeth to Syracuse.	= is directed towards, ie. travels to.
82	Venus. I fear, if the water should <u>begin to swell</u> , thou wilt <u>want cunning to guide</u> .	= become rough. = lack skill to steer the ferry; Venus seems concerned about Phao's youth and inexperience.
84		
86	Phao. These waters are commonly as the passengers be; and therefore carrying one so <u>fair in shew</u> , there is no cause to fear a rough sea.	85-86: <i>These waters...be</i> = the nature of the water can be expected to reflect the disposition of the passengers. = attractive in appearance (referring to Venus); <i>shew</i> was a common alternate form of <i>show</i> .
88		
90	Venus. To pass the time in thy boat, canst thou devise any <u>pastime</u> ?	= amusements or diversion.
92	Phao. If the wind be with me, I can <u>angle</u> or tell tales; if against me, it will be pleasure for you to see me take pains.	= fish, typically with hook and bait. ¹
94		93-94: Venus will be entertained by watching Phao strive to control the ferry in the face of a contrary wind.
96	Venus. I like not fishing, yet <u>was I born of the sea</u> .	= according to one story, Venus was born from the foam of the sea.

98 **Phao.** But he may bless fishing, that caught such an
one in the sea.

100 **Venus.** It was not with an angle, my boy, but with a
102 net.

104 **Phao.** So was it said that Vulcan caught Mars with
Venus.

106 **Venus.** Didst thou hear so? It was some tale.

108 **Phao.** Yea, madam, and that in the boat I did mean to
110 make my tale.

112 **Venus.** It is not for a ferryman to talk of the gods'

loves, but to tell how thy father could dig and thy

mother spin. – But come, let us away.

114 **Phao.** I am ready to wait.

118 [Exeunt.]

ACT I, SCENE II.

The same: the Ferry .

*Enter Trachinus (a courtier), Criticus (his page),
Pandion (a scholar), and Molus (his servant).*

1 **Trach.** Pandion, since your coming from the
2 university to the court, from Athens to Syracusa, how
do you feel yourself altered, either in humour or
4 opinion?

6 **Pand.** Altered, Trachinus: I say no more, and shame
that any should know so much.

98-99: **such an one** = ie. such a catch as Venus.

Interestingly, **such an one** was used about 30-40% of the time, compared with **such a one**, throughout the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

101-2: there is no point in Venus' playful suggestion that she might be caught with a **net** rather than a hook (**an angle**), except to accidentally, and awkwardly, allude to the famous story in which **Vulcan** designed a special net with which to catch **Venus** in the middle of a bout of love-making with her paramour **Mars**. Intentional or not, Phao makes the connection.

107: Venus denies the incident.

112-4: Venus reminds Phao that he is a mortal,⁶ and ought not to concern himself with the lives of the gods.

113-4: **thy father...spin** = allusion to Genesis 3:23, in which we are told, of Adam, that "*the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to work the ground whence he was taken*" (*Bishop's Bible*, 1568). The reference to this verse can be found in numerous 16th century works, the most frequent phrasing being, "*when Adam delved and Eve span*".

= get going.

= ie. "attend you."

Entering Characters: Trachinus is a veteran frequenter or attender of the court (a **courtier**) of Syracuse. **Pandion** is a scholar, recently arrived from the universities of Athens. They are attended by their servants, **Criticus** and **Molus**, respectively.

Trachinus spends much of the scene explaining to the dubious Pandion the advantages of abandoning his sparse scholar's life, and taking up the habits of a courtier.

= famous Greek seat of learning.

= disposition or temperament.

6-7: Pandion is embarrassed to admit he has changed.

8	Trach. <u>Here</u> you see as great virtue, far greater	= ie. in the queen's court.
10	<u>bravery, the action of that which you contemplate:</u>	10: bravery = ostentation or splendour. ¹ the action...contemplate = by alluding to the common philosophical distinction between living a life of activity and a life of contemplation, Trachinus cleverly frames his argument using a bit of phrasing with which Pandion would be very familiar. ⁶
12	Sapho, <u>fair by nature</u> , by birth royal, learned by education, <u>by government politic</u> , rich by peace:	= made beautiful by nature. = prudent or shrewd thanks to her self-control. ²
14	insomuch as it is hard to judge whether she be more beautiful or wise, virtuous or fortunate. Besides, do you not look on fair ladies instead of <u>good letters</u> ,	14-16: Besides...phrases = Trachinus cites the presence of the ladies as a benefit of being in court rather than in school. Note the nifty alliteration of fair faces and fine phrases . good letters = works of scholarship, literature. ^{1,6}
16	and behold fair faces instead of fine phrases? In universities, virtues and vices are but shadowed in	16-19: In universities...bad = at school, one comes to think about right and wrong in theoretical terms, but at court, good and bad are acted out in real life.
18	colours, white and black; <u>in courts shewed</u> to life, good and bad. There, times past are read of in old	in courts shewed = ie. "but in courts shown".
20	books, <u>times present set down by new devices</u> , times to come conjectured at by aim, by prophecy, or	20: times present...devices = the history of the present day is recorded using new ways of thinking. ² 20-22: times to come...chance = "and the future can only be guessed at."
22	chance; here, are times in perfection, not by device, as fables, but in execution, as truths. Believe me, Pandion,	22-23: here...truths = Trachinus again extols living life in all its messy reality in Syracuse over the theoretical study of it in school.
24	in Athens <u>you have but tombs</u> , we in court the bodies; you the pictures of Venus and the wise goddesses, we	= ie. "you live like dead men" (Bond, p. 556). ³
26	the persons and the virtues. What hath a scholar found out by study, that a courtier hath not found out by	28-31: Simple...reaping = through various analogies, Trachinus presses the point that what one experiences in court is many times more intense and satisfying than what one learns at school.
28	practice? <u>Simple</u> are you that think to see more at the candle-snuff than the sunbeams, to sail further in a	Simple (line 28) = foolish. ¹ 28-29: see more at the candle-snuff = the suggested image is of academics studying by the minimal light of a candle.
30	little brook than in the main ocean, to make a greater harvest by <u>gleaning</u> than reaping. How say you,	candle-snuff = snuffed-out or burned wick of a candle. ¹ gleaning (line 31) = gathering ears of corn left uncollected by the reaper. ¹
32	Pandion, is not all this true?	= "what more do you want?"
34	Pand. Trachinus, <u>what would you more?</u> All true.	36-37: pinned...boards = ie. confined in a small room constructed of poor material. pinned = hemmed in. ¹ = decoratively carved or ornamented with figures in relief. ¹
36	Trach. Cease then to lead thy life in a study, <u>pinned</u> with a few boards, and endeavor to be a courtier to live	
38	in <u>embossed</u> roofs.	
40	Pand. A labour intolerable for Pandion.	
42	Trach. Why?	

44 **Pand.** Because it is harder to shape a life to
dissemble, than to go forward with the liberty of truth.

46 **Trach.** Why, do you think in court any use to
48 dissemble?

50 **Pand.** Do you know in court any that mean to live?

52 **Trach.** You have no reason for it, but an old report.

54 **Pand.** Report hath not always a blister on her tongue.

56 **Trach.** Aye, but this is the court of Sapho, nature's
58 miracle, which resembleth the tree salurus, whose root
is fastened upon knotted steel, and in whose top bud
leaves of pure gold.

60 **Pand.** Yet hath salurus blasts and water boughs,
62 worms and caterpillars.

64 **Trach.** The virtue of the tree is not the cause, but the
easterly wind, which is thought commonly to bring
66 cankers and rottenness.

68 **Pand.** Nor the excellency of Sapho the occasion, but
the iniquity of flatterers, who always whisper in
70 princes' ears suspicion and sourness.

72 **Trach.** Why, then you conclude with me, that Sapho
for virtue hath no copartner.

74 **Pand.** Yea, and with the judgment of the world, that
76 she is without comparison.

78 **Trach.** We will thither straight.

44-45: **Because...dissemble** = Pandion makes the common
observation about the deceit in personal relations which is
universal at, and in fact necessary to thrive at, court.

47-48: **any use to dissemble** = "people are in the habit of
dissembling?"³ Trachinus is unconvincingly offended by
Pandion's suggestion.

50: Pandion answers Trachinus in the affirmative by asking
a question with an easy answer of "yes".

= ie. "to believe that". = rumour.

54: "rumours are not always so vicious as to cause the
speakers' tongues to become blistered," ie. what Pandion
said is true, and not just scandalous talk. One's **tongue** was
said to **blister** when one spoke something of a wicked or
scandalous enough quality. Rumour was frequently
personified, as here.

57: **the tree salurus** = Lyly appears to have invented this
tree out of whole cloth.⁴

57-58: **whose root...steel** = perhaps suggesting that the
tree, like Sapho's court, will never be toppled; the adjective
knotted was typically used to describe a tree or piece of
wood which was either gnarled or covered with knots, or
protuberances.¹

61-62: Pandion's point is that even nature's most brilliant
organisms have faults and blemishes.

blasts = blights, or withered state.¹

water boughs = lower branches or side shoots which
starve the upper part of the tree of sap. A 1631 gardening
book describes how trees suffering from water boughs "*can
scarcely get sap to liue.*"

= ie. the reason for its defects.

65-66: the **east wind** was proverbially considered harsh or
sharp; Bevington identifies Genesis 41:6, in which the
Pharoah dreamt of "*seven thin ears [of corn] blasted with the
east wind*" (*Bishop's Bible*), as the source of Lyly's take here.

cankers = (destructive) caterpillars.¹

= ie. "nor is". = ie. the reason for any corruption in court.
= wickedness.

68-70: a running theme in Elizabethan drama is the regret-
table influence of **flatterers** on those in power.

= Trachinus employs a term from the field of logic.
= equal.

78: Trachinus and Pandion will take the ferry to the court at
Syracuse.

80 **Pand.** I would I might return straight.

82 **Trach.** Why, there you may live still.

84 **Pand.** But not still.

86 **Trach.** How like you the ladies, are they not passing
88 fair?

90 **Pand.** Mine eye drinketh neither the colour of wine
92 nor women.

94 **Trach.** Yet I am sure that in judgment you are not so
96 severe, but that you can be content to allow of beauty
98 by day or by night.

100 **Pand.** When I behold beauty before the sun, his
102 beams dim beauty; when by candle, beauty obscures
104 torchlight: so as no time I can judge, because at any
106 time I cannot discern, being in the sun a brightness to
108 shadow beauty, and in beauty a glistering to extinguish
110 light.

112 **Trach.** Scholarlike said: you flatter that which you
114 seem to dislike, and to disgrace that which you most
116 wonder at. But let us away.

118 **Pand.** I follow. – [*To Molus.*] And you, sir boy, go
to Syracuse about by land, where you shall meet my
stuff, pay for the carriage, and convey it to my
lodging.

112 **Trach.** I think all your stuff are bundles of paper; but
now must you learn to turn your library to a wardrobe,

114 and see whether your rapier hang better by your side,
116 than the pen did in your ear.

[*Exeunt Trachinus and Pandion;
Criticus and Molus remain.*]

will thither = ie. will go to there.
straight = right away.

80: Pandion wishes he could return to his old life at the uni-
versity;³ **would** = wish.

= ie. at court. = always.

= in peace: Pandion puns on **still**.

= exceedingly.

= beautiful.

93-94: **allow...night** = ie. "praise or approve of (*allow of*)¹
beauty when you see it."

96-101: there is never the right amount of light available
by which Pandion can properly view beauty in order to
assess it.

his = ie. the sun's; the use of the possessive pronoun
its only became widespread in the 17th century.

= ie. candlelight.

100: **shadow** = ie. cast a shadow over, so it may not be dis-
cerned clearly.

glistering = brilliance, sparkle.²

100-1: **extinguish light** = outshine the candlelight, or
cast it in relative shadow.

= marvel.

= ie. Molus should walk to Syracuse around the harbour,
rather than take the ferry directly to the city.

= baggage.² = transportation (thereof).

113: Pandion will need to purchase a new set of clothes
appropriate to wear at court: academics were known for
their plain, even threadbare, dress.

wardrobe = ie. wardrobe, a common alternate form.

= light sword with a sharp point, worn by gentlemen.²

117-8: our courtier and scholar presumably embark on the
ferry for Syracuse proper, while their servants, remaining
behind, immediately begin to converse. In this way, Scene II
seamlessly blends into Scene III. Such imperceptible meld-
ing of what were considered to be separate scenes was a
common feature of Elizabethan drama.

ACT I, SCENE III.

The same: the Ferry.

Still on stage: Criticus and Molus.

1 **Crit.** Molus, what odds between thy commons in
2 Athens, and thy diet in court? a page's life, and a
4 scholar's?

6 **Molus.** This difference: there, of a little I had
somewhat; here, of a great deal, nothing. There did I

8 wear pantofles on my legs; here do I bear them in my
hands.

10 **Crit.** Thou mayst be skilled in thy logic, but not in thy
12 liripoop; belike no meat can down with you, unless
you have a knife to cut it. But come among us, and

14 you shall see us once in a morning have a mouse at a
bay.

16 **Molus.** A mouse? Unproperly spoken.

18 **Crit.** Aptly understood, a mouse of beef.

20 **Molus.** I think indeed a piece of beef as big as a

Onstage Characters: *Criticus* (the servant of **Trachinus** the courtier) and *Molus* (the servant of **Pandion** the scholar) will provide much of the play's comic relief. The lads follow the Elizabethan stage convention by which servants adopt the attitudes, opinions and skills of their individual masters. Molus, like Pandion, finds the adjustment to court life confusing, even difficult.

= "is the difference". = food rations, board.¹

5-8: Molus answers Criticus' two queries in order.

5-6: *there...nothing* = at the university, mealtime always promised something (*somewhat*) to eat, of which Molus would consume only a limited amount (scholars famously were served plain and minimal rations); at court, however, he is unable to eat any of the rich food, of which there is an abundance.

7: *pantofles* = slippers.

legs = ie. feet.

7-8: *here do I...hands* = as a servant in court, Molus finds himself carrying his master's slippers.⁶

11: *liripoop* = common sense^{3,4} or eloquence.⁵

11-12: *belike...cut it* = while on the surface, Criticus seems to be commenting on Molus' diet, Bevington suggests that Criticus is actually teasing Molus on his inability to adjust to life in the real world: "you are unable to think or speak sensibly, without dissecting everything with sophistry."

13-14: *have a mouse at bay* = Criticus' meaning is a bit obscure: he may simply be meaning, "capture a piece of meat";⁶ but *mouse* was also used to mean "woman". Either way, the image of an organized hunting party tracking a mouse is intended to be absurd.⁶

at a bay = a hunting expression, referring to the point at which an animal, having been driven into a position from which it can no longer retreat or flee, turns to face its pursuer.

16: Molus is confused.

18: *Aptly* = "(but) appropriately".¹

a mouse of beef = a rich piece of beef,¹ specifically the joint or "piece below the round" (Halliwell, p. 587);⁹ *mouse* was sometimes used to mean "muscle".¹

20-21: *I think...cats* = Molus, taking *mouse* literally, re-

22 mouse serves a great company of such cats. But what
else?

24 **Crit.** For other sports: a square die in a page's pocket
is as decent as a square cap on a graduate's head.

26

28 **Molus.** You courtiers be mad fellows! We silly souls
are only plodders at ergo, whose wits are clasped up

30 with our books; and so full of learning are we at home,
that we scarce know good manners when we come

abroad; cunning in nothing but in making small things

32 great by figures, pulling on with the sweat of our
studies a great shoe upon a little foot, burning out

34 one candle in seeking for another; raw wordlings in

matters of substance, passing wranglers about

36 shadows.

38 **Crit.** Then is it time lost to be a scholar. We pages are
politians: for look what we hear our masters talk of,

40 we determine of; where we suspect, we undermine;
and where we mislike for some particular grudge,

sponds ironically.

= reference to the popular pastime of gambling.

square = cube-shaped.¹

= appropriate.¹ = ie. square-topped academic cap.¹

27-36 (below): Molus admits to the naivety of scholars
when it comes to how to behave in the real world.

= ie. "we simple scholars".

= ie. are only good for engaging laboriously in exercises in
logic.

plodders = persistent toilers.¹

ergo = Latin for "therefore", a term from logic.

30-31: *come abroad* = go out and about, ie. leave the
grounds of the university.

31-32: *cunning...figures* = skilled only in the use of rhetoric
to inflate the importance or distort the meaning of ideas
through logic (*figures*).¹

32-34: *pulling on...another* = Molus lists a couple of
exaggerated examples of the types of profitless intellectual
exercises at which scholars are good.

= "naïve citizens of the world",¹ ie. an oxymoronic way of
describing those who are inexperienced in the ways of the
world; *wordlings* was a common alternate form of *world-*
lings. However, there may be a play on words here, as
wordlings also suggests one who is an expert at using *words*,
ie. rhetoric.

35: *substance* = ie. reality, the real world.

35-36: *passing...shadows* = (but) exceedingly good
(*passing*) debaters (*wranglers*) of immaterial or insub-
stantial, hence trivial or abstract, matters (*shadows*).²

= a waste of time.

39: *politians* = ie. politicians, experts in practicing politics,
hence manipulators and schemers. According to the OED,
the word *politian* (which, as a noun, originates here with
Lyly), was derived from the word *polity*; but Fairholt
believes that Lyly intended for *politians* to be the plural-
ization of the name of **Angelo Politian**, a well-known 15th
century Italian scholar, who was discussed in a number of
16th century English works.

39-40: *for look what...determine of* = the pages of the
court make decisions on topics discussed by their masters.

for look what = for whatever.^{1,6}

= "those we mistrust, we sneakily destroy."

41-42: *where we...grief* = with those individuals the pages
dislike, the pages pick quarrels "under the pretext of
squaring general grievances" (Bevington, p. 217).⁶

42 there we pick quarrels for a general grief. Nothing
among us but instead of “Good morrow”, “What

44 news?” We fall from cogging at dice to cog with

46 states; and so forward are mean men in those matters,
that they would be cocks to tread down others, before
they be chickens to rise themselves. Youths are very

48 forward to stroke their chins, though they have no
beards, and to lie as loud as he that hath lived longest.

50 **Molus.** These be the golden days!

52 **Crit.** Then be they very dark days, for I can see no
54 gold.

56 **Molus.** You are gross-witted, master courtier.

58 **Crit.** And you, master scholar, slender-witted.

60 **Molus.** I meant times which were prophesied golden
for plenty of all things: sharpness of wit, excellency in
62 knowledge, policy in government, for –

64 **Crit.** Soft, scholaris. I deny your argument.

66 **Molus.** Why, it is no argument.

68 **Crit.** Then I deny it because it is no argument. – But
let us go and follow our masters.

70

[Exeunt.]

ACT I, SCENE IV.

The same: the Ferry.

*Enter Mileta, Lamia, Favilla, Ismena,
Canope, and Eugenua.*

1 **Mileta.** Is it not strange that Phao on the sudden
2 should be so fair?

42-44: **Nothing...news** = no time is wasted an exchanging
meaningless civilities: keeping pace with events takes
precedence over good manners.

44-45: **We fall...states** = the pages move easily between
cheating (**cogging**) at gambling to flattering (**to cog** = to
sweet-talk)¹ men of high rank (**states**).

45-47: **and so...themselves** = and so eager are the servants
to play the game, that they find more satisfaction in destroy-
ing those above them than in improving their own stations.

= ie. eager to pretentiously appear deep in thought.^{1,4}

= ie. who is the most experienced in doing so.

51: Molus will explain what he means at lines 60-62 below.

53-54: Criticus admits that all their conniving brings the
pages no wealth.

= stupid, dull-witted;¹ Criticus has misunderstood Molus'
point.

= simple-minded; Bevington notes that **slender** (meaning
"thin") was an antonym of **gross** ("thick"), even though
gross-witted and **slender-witted** are synonyms; the wordplay
is of course deliberate.

= ie. "these are times".

= ie. an abundance.

60-62: Molus is again ironic.

64: **Soft** = "wait a moment", used as here to interrupt.
scholaris = Latin for "scholar".

66: Molus was not engaging in a logical proof.⁶

Scene IV: though not depicted on stage, an important de-
velopment has taken place between scenes: Venus has made
Phao exceedingly handsome. Unfortunately, the gift has
come with a price: Phao finds himself disagreeably proud of
his new looks, but repelled by the idea of falling in love.

Entering Characters: we meet Queen Sapho's female
attendants.

= ie. suddenly, an alternate expression which appeared in
the 1560's.

= beautiful, attractive.

4 **Lamia.** It cannot be strange, sith Venus was disposed
to make him fair. That cunning had been better
6 bestowed on women, which would have deserved
thanks of nature.
8
Ism. Haply she did it in spite of women, or scorn of
10 nature.
12 **Can.** Proud elf! How squeamish he is become already,
using both disdainful looks and imperious words,
14 insomuch that he galleth with ingratitude. And then,
ladies, you know how it cutteth a woman to become a
16 wooer.
18 **Eug.** Tush! Children and fools, the fairer they are, the
sooner they yield; an apple will catch the one, a baby
20 the other.
22 **Ism.** Your lover, I think, be a fair fool, for you love
nothing but fruit and puppets.
24
Mileta. I laugh at that you all call "love", and judge
26 it only a word called "love". Methinks liking, a curtsy,
a smile, a beck, and such-like are the very quintessence
28 of love.
30 **Fav.** Aye Mileta, but were you as wise as you would
be thought fair, or as fair as you think yourself wise,
32 you would be as ready to please men, as you are coy
to prank yourself; and as careful to be accounted
34 amorous, as you are willing to be thought discreet.
36 **Mileta.** No, no; men are good souls (poor souls) who
never inquire but with their eyes, loving to father the
38 cradle, though they but mother the child. Give me their
gifts, not their virtues: a grain of their gold weigheth
down a pound of their wit; a dram of "give me" is
40 heavier than an ounce of "hear me". Believe me,
42 ladies, "give" is a pretty thing.
44 **Ism.** I cannot but oftentimes smile to myself to hear

4-5: **It cannot...fair** = somehow it has become public
knowledge that Venus is responsible for Phao's trans-
formation.
sith = since.
5-6: **That cunning...women** = ie. it would have been
preferable if Venus had used her skill (**cunning**) to make
women more attractive.
= perhaps. = ie. to spite.
12: **Proud elf** = Canope refers to Phao; **elf** is used here
either (1) in a general derogatory sense, or (2) to indicate
Phao's small size.¹
squeamish = aloof.¹
= "irritates (others) with his unfriendliness."^{1,2}
15-16: **how it...wooer** = women hate to find themselves in
the position of having to pursue a man! Canope's comment
suggests that the ladies are smitten with Phao.
= submit.¹ = ie. a fool. = doll.¹
= ie. Phao.
= dolls.¹
= ie. that which.
= fondness.¹
27: **beck** = a mute signaling, as with a finger or nod.¹
quintessence = embodiments or essence.¹
30-34: if Mileta were wiser, she would be less of a prude
or flirt and more of a lover.
would (line 30) = wish to.
32-33: **coy to prank yourself** = reluctant to dress showily;
but Daniel⁴ suggests simply "preen" for **prank**.
= anxious. = thought, judged.
37-38: **loving...child** = "and eager to become fathers (ie.
sleep with women), but leaving the resulting child to be
raised by its mother".³
39-40: **a grain...wit** = a man's wealth (which should be
showered on a woman) is more important than his in-
telligence.
40-41: **a dram..."hear me"** = Mileta would rather receive a
modest present than waste time in idle chatter with a man.
dram = small dose, or a weight of but 1/8 ounce.¹
= ie. cannot help.

men call us weak vessels, when they prove themselves

46 broken-hearted; us frail, when their thoughts cannot

hang together; studying with words to flatter, and

48 with bribes to allure; when we commonly wish their

tongues in their purses, they speak so simply; and their

50 offers in their bellies, they do it so peevisly.

52 **Mileta.** It is good sport to see them want manner: for

then fall they to good manners, having nothing in their

54 mouths but “sweet mistress”, wearing our hands out

with courtly kissings, when their wits fail in courtly

56 discourses. Now ruffling their hairs, now setting their ruffs, then gazing with their eyes, then sighing with a

58 privy wring by the hand, thinking us like to be wowed

by signs and ceremonies.

60 **Eug.** Yet we, when we swear with our mouths we are

62 not in love, then we sigh from the heart and pine in

64 love.

Can. We are mad wenches if men mark our words:

66 for when I say “I would none cared for love more than I”, what mean I, but “I would none loved but I?” Where

68 we cry “away!”, do we not presently say “go to”; and

70 when men strive for kisses, we exclaim “let us alone”, as though we would fall to that ourselves.

45-46: **when they...broken-hearted** = when frustrated male lovers are so quick to act heartbroken, hence showing that they are as constitutionally delicate as are women.

46: **frail** = weak-minded.
46-47: **their thoughts...together** = men are scatter-brained.

= taking pains to flatter those women to whom they are attracted.

48: **with bribes to flatter** = ie. attempt to win over women with gifts.
48-49: **when we...simply** = metaphorically, women prefer their suitors to give them rich gifts but to keep quiet, because their ability to speak is so feeble.
commonly = customarily.¹
they speak (line 49) = ie. "because they speak".

49-50: **their offers...peevisly** = "we wish men would refrain from making their proposals, because they always come out sounding so foolishly (**peevisly**)".^{1,6}

= amusing, entertaining. = lack skill in correct courting behaviour.

53-59: **having nothing...ceremonies** = when attempting to woo, tongue-tied men are unable to engage in anything beyond trite conversation and hackneyed gestures.

55-56: **courtly discourses** = speaking cleverly, as was expected of those who sought to win high-ranking women.
56-57: **setting their ruffs** = "putting their high collars (**ruffs**) in order by arranging the pleats" (Fairholt, p. 293).⁵

58: **privy wring by the hand** = secret squeezing of a woman's hand.
like to be wowed = likely to be successfully won.
wowed = alternate form of **wooded**.
= gestures and empty acts of regard or politeness.¹

61-63: Eugenia points out women's own hypocrisies.
= languish from, or are vexed or tormented with.^{1,2}

65: women are furious when men pay attention to women's literal words.

66-67: **for when...loved but I?"** = paraphrasing Bevington, who suggests: "for when I say that I wish that all women regarded love with as much indifference as I do, what else do I mean except that I wish I was the *only* woman to feel loved?" (p. 221).⁶

= immediately (also).¹ = ie. "get to it."

70: "in a tone that suggests we would initiate the kissing ourselves."^{3,6}

72 **Fav.** Nay then, Canope, it is time to go – and behold
Phao.

74 **Ism.** Where?

76 **Fav.** In your head, Ismena, nowhere else. But let us
78 keep on our way.

80 **Ism.** Wisely.

82 [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT I.

= according to Fairholt,⁵ Favilla means "consider", but Is-
mena takes *behold* literally, to mean "to see".

77: *head* = ie. imagination.

77-78: *But let...way* = the ladies are on their way to
court.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Before Sybilla's Cave; night-time.

*Enter Phao with a small glass;
Sybilla sitting in her cave.*

1 **Phao.** Phao, thy mean fortune causeth thee to use an
2 oar, and thy sudden beauty a glass: by the one is seen
4 thy need, in the other thy pride. Oh Venus! In thinking
thou hast blessed me, thou hast cursed me, adding to
a poor estate a proud heart; and to a disdain'd man a
6 disdain'd mind. Thou dost not flatter thyself, Phao,
thou art fair. – Fair? I fear me, "fair" be a word too
8 foul for a face so passing fair. – But what availeth
10 beauty? Hadst thou all things thou wouldest wish,
thou mightst die tomorrow; and didst thou want all
12 things thou desirest, thou shalt live till thou diest. –
Tush, Phao! there is grown more pride in thy mind
than favour in thy face. Blush, foolish boy, to think
14 on thine own thoughts: cease complaints, and crave
counsel. – And lo! behold Sybilla in the mouth of her

Entering Characters: our ferryman **Phao** is carrying a mirror (**glass**), the obvious prop of a man obsessed with his own good looks. However, despite his superficially wonderful gift of beauty, Phao is actually now miserable, whereas before he met Venus he was contented.

Sybilla is a prophetess. In the *Aeneid*, the Roman poet Virgil portrayed Sybil as living in a cave. The story of her incredible age was told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.

1-18 (below): Phao begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy. Note the frequent dashes, which signal Phao's scattered reflections and rapidly-changing stream of thought.

1: **mean fortune** = lot in life as one of inferior means and social status.

1-2: **use an oar** = ie. work for a living.

2-3: **by the one...need** = the fact that Phao must work on a ferry belies his lack of material possessions.

3-6: **Oh Venus...mind** = interestingly, Phao recognizes that his gift of beauty has had the undesirable effect of creating within him an arrogant pride in his good looks, a feeling he is unable to minimize or control.

5: **a poor estate** = material poverty.¹

5-6: **and to...mind** = in addition to being regularly snubbed due to his low station in life, Phao unpleasantly finds himself now to be a scorner of women.

6-7: **Thou dost...art fair** = it is not just flattery, it is true: he really is gorgeous!

7-8: **too foul** = ie. not good enough. Note the repetition of the word **fair**, the wordplay between **fair** and **fear**, and the extensive alliteration in the sentence across lines 7-8.

= exceedingly. = what good is.

= ie. "even if you possessed".

= "even if you lacked".

= proverbial.

13: **favour** = comeliness.

Blush = ie. from shame.

13-14: **to think...thoughts** = ie. to waste time only *thinking* about his problems (which gets him nowhere) instead of *doing* something about them.

14-15: **crave counsel** = solicit advice.

= behold.

16 cave: I will salute her. – Lady, I fear me I am out of
 18 my way, and so benighted withal that I am compelled
 20 to ask your direction.
 22 **Syb.** Fair youth, if you will be advised by me, you
 24 shall for this time seek none other inn than my cave,
 26 for that it is no less perilous to travel by night, than
 28 uncomfortable.
 30 **Phao.** Your courtesy offered hath prevented what my
 32 necessity was to entreat.
 34 **Syb.** Come near, take a stool, and sit down. Now, for
 36 that these winter nights are long, and that children
 38 delight in nothing more than to hear old wives' tales,
 40 we will beguile the time with some story. And though
 42 you behold wrinkles and furrows in my tawny face,
 44 yet may you happily find wisdom and counsel in my
 46 white hairs.
 48 **Phao.** Lady, nothing can content me better than a tale;
 50 neither is there anything more necessary for me than
 52 counsel.
 54 **Syb.** Were you born so fair by nature?
 56 **Phao.** No, made so fair by Venus.
 58 **Syb.** For what cause?
 60 **Phao.** I fear me for some curse.
 62 **Syb.** Why, do you love and cannot obtain?
 64 **Phao.** No, I may obtain but cannot love.
 66 **Syb.** Take heed of that, my child!
 68 **Phao.** I cannot choose, good Madame.
 70 **Syb.** Then hearken to my tale, which I hope shall be
 72 as a straight thread to lead you out of those crooked
 74 conceits, and place you in the plain path of love.

16: *salute* = greet.
 16-17: *out of my way* = lost.
 17: *benighted* = means both (1) overcome by nightfall,
 and (2) lost in a spiritual darkness.¹
withal = besides.¹
 = ie. at this time.
 = because.
 = disquieting.¹
 25-26: Sybilla's courteous invitation to Phao to stay with her
 has anticipated (*prevented*) that which circumstances require
 him to ask for.
 28-29: *for that* = because.
 = pleasantly pass.²
 = yellowish-brown, and perhaps blotchy, with age.^{1,2}
 = naturally beautiful.
 48: ie. "are you in love with a woman who is not attracted
 to you?"
 50: Phao acknowledges that, thanks to his beauty, he can
 possess any woman he desires, but he does not want any
 because of his disdain for the gentler sex.
 = be careful.
 = "have no choice", "cannot help it".
 56: *hearken* = listen.
 56-58: *which I hope...love* = metaphorically, which shall
 give Phao a plan to follow to overcome his perverse fancies
 (*crooked conceits*), ie. his unnatural and debilitating disdain
 for all women.
plain (line 58) = clear, unobstructed.¹
 Sybilla alludes to the story of the Greek hero **Theseus**,
 who went to **Crete** to slay the monster known as the **Mino-**
taur, which was kept in a **labyrinth**. Theseus was helped by
 the Princess **Ariadne**, who, infatuated with the hero, gave
 him not only a sword with which to kill the Minotaur, but
 also a spool of *thread* which he unwound as he entered the

60 **Phao.** I attend.

62 **Syb.** When I was young, as you now are – I speak it
without boasting, – I was as beautiful: for Phoebus in
64 his godhead sought to get my maidenhead; but I, fond
wench, receiving a benefit from above, began to wax

66 squeamish beneath: not unlike to asolis, which being
made green by heavenly drops, shrinketh into the
68 ground when there fall showers; or the Syrian mud,
which being made white chalk by the sun, never
70 ceaseth rolling till it lie in the shadow. He, to sweet

72 prayers, added great promises. I, either desirous to
make trial of his power, or willing to prolong mine

74 own life, caught up my handful of sand, consenting to
his suit if I might live as many years as there were

76 grains. Phoebus (for what cannot gods do, and what
for love will they not do?) granted my petition. And
78 then, I sigh and blush to tell the rest, I recalled my
promise.

80 **Phao.** Was not the god angry to see you unkind?

82 **Syb.** Angry, my boy, which was the cause that I was
unfortunate.

84 **Phao.** What revenge for such rigour used the gods?

86 **Syb.** None, but suffering us to live, and know we are
88 no gods.

90 **Phao.** I pray tell on.

92 **Syb.** I will. Having received long life by Phoebus and

94 rare beauty by nature, I thought all the year would
have been May, that fresh colours would always

continue, that time and fortune could not wear out

labyrinth. Having dispensed with the beast, he was able to
easily leave the maze by following the thread back to its exit.

60: "I am listening."

62-116 (below): Sybilla's sad tale was told by Ovid in Book
XIV of the *Metamorphoses*.

= alternate name for the Olympian god Apollo.

= divineness. = ie. seduce the virgin Sybilla. = foolish.

= girl. = ie. attention from a god. = grow.

66: *squeamish* = coy or prudish.¹

beneath = beneath heaven, ie. on earth; *beneath* is
used in opposition to *above* in line 65.

66-70: *asolis...shadow* = a pair of analogies makes the
point that gifts from Heaven should not be shunned. Lyly
appears to have fabricated both the supposed "plant" called
the *asolis* and the qualities of *Syrian mud*.⁴

heavenly drops = dew.

showers = rain.

= entreaties, ie. begging.

= test; the sense is that she wanted to see how far she could
push Apollo's patience.

73: *caught up...sand* = in the *Metamorphoses*, Sybilla only
points to a mound of sand.

73-74: *consenting...suit* = agreeing to give herself to
him.

77-78: *I recalled my promise* = Sybilla retracted her
promise to sleep with Apollo after he had extended
her lifespan.

= reason.

85: "how did the gods punish you for such stubbornness or
cruelty (*rigour*)¹?"

= allowing.

92-98: *Having...yellow* = Apollo's gift of a long life was not
accompanied by perpetual youth, so that most of Sybilla's
life has been spent in aged decrepitude.

93-94: *I thought...May* = Sybilla expected to live her
entire, and now exceptionally long, life as a young and
beautiful woman.

96 | what gods and nature had wrought up; not once
 98 | imagining that white and red should return to black
 and yellow: the juniper, the longer it grew, the
 100 | crookeder it waxed; or that in a face without blemish,
 there should come wrinkles without number. I did as
 you do, go with my glass, ravished with the pride of
 102 | mine own beauty; and you shall do as I do, loathe to
 see a glass, disdainng deformity. There was none that
 104 | heard of my fault, but shunned my favour, insomuch as
 I stooped for age before I tasted of youth, sure to be
 106 | long-lived, uncertain to be beloved. Gentlemen that
 used to sigh from their hearts for my sweet love, began
 108 | to point with their fingers at my withered face, and
 laughed to see the eyes, out of which fire seemed to
 110 | sparkle, to be succoured, being old, with spectacles.
 This causeth me to withdraw myself to a solitary
 112 | cave, where I must lead six hundred years in no less
pensiveness of crabbed age, than grief of remembered
 114 | youth. Only this comfort, that being ceased to be fair, I
 study to be wise, wishing to be thought a grave matron,
 116 | since I cannot return to be a young maid.

118 | **Phao.** Is it not possible to die before you become so
 old?
 120 | **Syb.** No more possible than to return as you are, to be
 122 | so young.

124 | **Phao.** Could not you settle your fancy upon any, or
 would not destiny suffer it?
 126 | **Syb.** Women willingly ascribe that to fortune, which
 128 | wittingly was committed by frowardness.

= shaped, such as by kneading paste or dough.¹

97: **white and red** = ie. pale skin tinted with the blush of beauty, traditional poetic colours used to describe a youthful and lovely face.

97-98: **black and yellow** = tawny (see line 32 above) with age.

= grew, ie. became. = ie. nor did she imagine once that.
 = a countless number of wrinkles.

101: **go with my glass** = walk around gripping a mirror
 (in which to continually peer).

ravished with = in rhapsody over.

102-3: **and you...deformity** = Sybilla admonishes Phao: there will be a time when he too, fearing how he has aged, will avoid looking into a mirror.

104: **heard of my fault** = ie. learned of her worn-out appearance.

shunned my favour = avoided becoming romantically linked with her.

105: **I stooped...youth** = Sybilla grew bent over with age before she had a chance to enjoy her prime of life, or perhaps more specifically, before she had a chance to sample the delights of love.

sure = certain, ie. irrevocably.

= perhaps meaning the opposite of "certain", ie. definitely never.

= assisted.

= ie. in at least as much.

= mournful meditation over her harsh old age.² = ie. than in.

Sybilla's Age: in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells us that the Sybil was already 700 years old, and destined to live 300 more, until "*I shall shrivel to almost nothing, / Weigh almost nothing, when no one, seeing me, / Would ever think a god had found me lovely*" (Humphries, p. 343).¹⁵

124-5: "were you able to find a lover, or was it your fate never to do so?"

127-8: when women cannot get a man, due to their refractory or perverse natures (**frowardness**), they blame their bad luck.

wittingly = knowingly.

130 **Phao.** What will you have me do?

132 **Syb.** Take heed you do not as I did. Make not too
 much of fading beauty, which is fair in the cradle and

134 foul in the grave; resembling polyon, whose leaves are

white in the morning and blue before night; or anyta,

136 which being a sweet flower at the rising of the sun,
 becometh a weed if it be not plucked before the

138 setting. Fair faces have no fruits if they have no

witnesses. When you shall behold over this tender

140 flesh a tough skin, your eyes, which were wont to
 glance on others' faces, to be sunk so hollow that you

142 can scarce look out of your own head; and when all
 your teeth shall wag as fast as your tongue, then will

144 you repent the time which you cannot recall, and be
 enforced to bear what most you blame. Lose not the

146 pleasant time of your youth, than the which there is
 nothing swifter, nothing sweeter. Beauty is a slippery

148 good, which decreaseth whilest it is increasing,

resembling the medlar, which in the moment of his full

150 ripeness, is known to be in a rottenness. Whiles you
 look in the glass, it waxeth old with time; if on the sun,

152 parched with heat; if on the wind, blasted with cold. A
 great care to keep it, a short space to enjoy it, a sudden

154 time to lose it. Be not coy when you are courted.
Fortune's wings are made of time's feathers, which

156 stay not whilest one may measure them.

132-156 (below): Sybilla addresses Phao's first problem – his pride in his looks – with a warning to appreciate and take advantage of his beauty, because it can be expected to fade quickly enough!

132-3: **Make not...beauty** = "do not obsess over your good looks, which will fade away soon enough".

134-5: **resembling...night = polyon** (properly called simply **poly**) is an herb actually covered with white hairs.¹ Lyly has borrowed its description from Pliny, who wrote that the leaves of poly "*are white in the morning, purple at midday, and azure at sunset*" (Bostock, Vol. IV, p. 325-326, from Pliny 21.21).¹³

= a fictitious herb, invented here by Lyly,⁴ then borrowed by other writers, including Robert Greene, for mention in later works.

138-9: **Fair faces...witnesses** = there is no benefit to being beautiful if there is no one around to see it. Note the nice alliteration in this line.

= Sybilla points to Phao's own face or skin.
 = accustomed.

= wiggle (from looseness).

= ie. the frustrations of old age, which he will find fault with.^{1,6}

147-8: **Beauty...good** = ie. because it is difficult to hang onto.
good (line 148) = ie. a thing which is good.¹

= even as one becomes more beautiful while approaching the full bloom of youth, the onset of the body's built-in program for aging, and the accompanying fading of one's looks, is already underway.

= the apple-like fruit of the tree of the same name.¹ = ie. its.

= ie. "your face grows". = ie. "you face".

= ie. "your skin becomes parched", = withered.

153-4: **a sudden time to lose it** = the beauty of one's countenance disappears quite suddenly.

= "don't waste time playing hard-to-get."

= poetical way of admonishing, "time flies."

= wait around, delay.

157-165 (below): Sybilla now turns to Phao's cynical attitude towards his fellows (especially women), warning the ferryman not to be so arrogant in his youth, but instead to be

158 Be affable and courteous in youth, that you may be
honoured in age. Roses that lose their colours, keep
their savours, and plucked from the stalk, are put to

160 the still. Cotonea, because it boweth when the sun
riseth, is sweetest when it is oldest; and children,
162 which in their tender years sow courtesy, shall in
their declining states reap pity. Be not proud of
164 beauty's painting, whose colours consume themselves,
because they are beauty's painting.

166 **Phao.** I am driven by your counsel into díverse

168 conceits, neither knowing how to stand, or where to
fall; but to yield to love is the only thing I hate.

170 **Syb.** I commit you to Fortune, who is like to play such
172 pranks with you as your tender years can scarce bear,

174 nor your green wits understand. But repair unto me
often, and if I cannot remove the effects, yet I will
176 manifest the causes.

178 **Phao.** I go, ready to return for advice before I am
resolved to adventure.

180 **Syb.** Yet hearken two words: thou shalt get friendship

by dissembling, love by hatred; unless thou perish,

respectful of others, so that he will be revered himself when
he enters old age.

= a metaphor for fading looks.

159: *savours* = smell.

159-160: *put to the still* = ie. distilled, so as to produce
rose oil. Lyly used this exact analogy in his later play *Midas*
to describe fading beauty.

= Latin name for the quince tree; so called because the fruit
is covered with fine hairs called "cotton".¹

= ie. which if. = youth.

= mercy or compassion.¹

= ie. "your natural beauty" (Bevington, p. 229).⁶

= ie. an artifice (Bevington, p. 229).⁶

167-9: Phao finds Sybilla's widely scattered advice befud-
dling.⁶

167-8: *diverse conceits* = various and sundry lines of
thought. Editors typically emend the B.L. quarto's *diverse* to
divers, the era's more common form (the two words have
separate entries in the OED), but in this period, both *divers*
and *diverse* were stressed on the first syllable.

= despite Sybilla's long-winded efforts to guide Phao, the
ferryman remains possessed of a scorn for love and
women.

171-3: *I commit...understand* = Sybilla cannot do anything
more for Phao at this time. She describes personified *For-
tune* as a trickster who will likely (*like*) place unexpected
adversity into Phao's life.

green (line 173) = immature.

= come.

= mitigate the harm that alights on Phao.

= reveal, ie. explain, why these things are happening to him.

177-8: *am resolved to adventure* = "make any decision as
to what plan of action to pursue."

180-4 (below): Sybilla makes some predictions for Phao,
before resuming her dispensing of advice. As you, the
reader, struggle to make sense of each element of the
prophetess' counsel, you may wish to keep in mind Bond's
dictum, that Sybilla's "*oracles need not be explicable
everywhere*" (p. 558).³

180: *Yet hearken two words* = "yet listen to a few more
words (of advice and prediction)."

180-1: *thou shalt...hatred* = basically, Phao will only
get people to like him by acting like a fake and a jerk.

181-2: *unless...shalt perish* = an obscure line, which
Fairholt believes to be corrupt. Bond's attempt to interpret

182 thou shalt perish: in digging for a stone, thou shalt
reach a star; thou shalt be hated most, because thou art
184 loved most. Thy death shall be feared and wished. –
So much for prophecy, which nothing can prevent;
186 and this for counsel, which thou mayst follow. Keep
not company with ants that have wings, nor talk with

188 any near the hill of a mole; where thou smellst the
sweetness of serpent's breath, beware thou touch no

190 part of the body. Be not merry among those that put
bugloss in their wine, and sugar in thine. If any talk
192 of the eclipse of the sun, say thou never sawest it.

Nourish no conies in thy vaults, nor swallows in thine

194 eaves. Sow next thy vines mandrage, and ever keep

thine ears open, and thy mouth shut; thine eyes

196 upward, and thy fingers down: so shalt thou do better
than otherwise, though never so well as I wish.

198 **Phao.** Alas! Madam, your prophecy threateneth
200 miseries, and your counsel warneth impossibilities.

202 **Syb.** Farewell, I can answer no more.

this ominous-sounding warning is worth repeating: "unless [Phao] injures himself by becoming a dissimulator and hater, he will suffer lack of love and friendship" (p. 557).³

182-3: **in digging...star** = by acting cruelly, he will obtain a woman of an exalted position. Sybilla basically predicts that Phao will fall in love with Sapho.

186: **this for counsel** = "here is some advice".

187: **ants...wings** = ie. ambitious men,³ a metaphor Lyly reused in his later play *Midas*.

187-8: **nor talk...mole** = ie. "be careful not to speak anywhere where you might be overheard",³ a warning, suggests Bevington, to avoid becoming involved with intrigue. The metaphor takes advantage of the common belief that *moles* had a keen sense of hearing.

188-190: **where thou...body** = "avoid being seduced by those who flatter you, or those who seem attractive on the surface but are really malevolent."

190-1: **Be not merry...thine** = a warning not to let others take advantage of Phao as they climb in status.

190-1: **put bugloss...wine** = steep their own wine with *bugloss*; bugloss, a pretty, blue and hairy flower,¹ was thought in the 16th century to cure depression. In *Euphues and His England* (1580, hereafter *Euphues*), Lyly described wine mixed with bugloss as increasing one's "desire or lust". Earlier editors only pointed out that in former times, bugloss was mixed with wine to "improve" it or "flavour" it.^{3,5}

sugar in thine = Bond says that adding sugar to wine ruins it, but there are plenty of references in the era's literature to those who enjoyed wine sweetened with sugar or honey.

191-2: **If any talk...sawest it** = ie. because anyone over-hearing talk of an *eclipse* may interpret it to be a discussion of the demise of the monarch (Bond, p. 558).³

193-4: **Nourish...eaves** = a warning for Phao not to support (human) parasites in his own home.⁶

Nourish no conies = feed no rabbits,
vaults = rooms for storage of liquor or wine.^{1,3}

194: **Sow...mandrage** = in *Euphues*, Lyly wrote that planting or grafting the poisonous narcotic plant mandrake (sometimes called *mandrage*, as here) next to one's *vines* improved the quality of the grapes.

195-6: **thine eyes upward** = Phao should direct his eyes towards Heaven, so as to keep his thoughts pure. = a metaphoric admonition to shun ambition.⁶

ACT II, SCENE II.*The Ferry.**Still onstage: Phao.**Enter Sapho, Trachinus, Pandion,
Criticus, and Molus.*

1 **Phao.** Unhappy Phao! – But soft, what gallant troupe
2 is this? What gentlewoman is this?

4 **Crit.** Sapho, a lady here in Sicily.

6 **Sapho.** What fair boy is that?

8 **Trach.** Phao, the ferryman of Syracuse.

10 **Phao.** I never saw one more brave: be all ladies of
12 such majesty?

14 **Crit.** No, this is she that all wonder at and worship.

16 **Sapho.** I have seldom seen a sweeter face. Be all
ferryman of that fairness?

18 **Trach.** No, Madam, this is he that Venus determined
among men to make the fairest.

20 **Sapho.** Seeing I am only come forth to take the air, I
22 will cross the ferry, and so the fields, then going in
through the park. I think the walk will be pleasant.

24 **Trach.** You will much delight in the flattering green,
26 which now beginneth to be in his glory.

28 **Sapho.** Sir boy, will ye undertake to carry us over the
water? – Are you dumb, can you not speak?

30 **Phao.** Madam, I crave pardon. I am spurblind, I could
32 scarce see.

34 **Sapho.** It is pity in so good a face there should be an
evil eye.

36

Scene Setting: Phao is to be understood to have returned from Sybilla's cave to his outpost.

Entering Characters: along with *Queen Sapho*, we greet to the stage the courtier *Trachinus* with his page *Criticus*, and *Pandion* the scholar with his servant *Molus*.

= wait a moment. = grand or ostentatious company.^{1,2}
= Phao is struck by Sapho's beauty, or perhaps he simply picks her out as the head of the party.

= good-looking.

= excellent, impressive.²

15-16: *Be all...fairness* = Bevington suggests the presence of an inside joke here, as the audience would recognize the ironic reference to the unattractive boatmen who ride the Thames.

= ie. take crossing on the ferry.
= enclosed royal hunting preserve.¹

= pleasant vegetation.²
= ie. to bloom; *his* = its.

= condescending term of address.

28-29: after Sapho asks her question, there is a pause as she vainly waits for the stunned Phao to reply.

31-32: Phao claims to have been struck blind, or nearly so, upon viewing Her Majesty; *spurblind* is an alternate form of the term *purblind*, which in the 16th century meant "short-sighted" or "nearly blind"; one may ask how Phao's having poor vision affects his hearing.

34-35: *there should...evil eye* = ie. that Phao should possess a bewitching eye (*evil eye*);⁹ Sapho means that she herself has been charmed by Phao.⁶

38 **Phao.** I would in my face there were never an eye.

40 **Sapho.** Thou canst never be rich in a trade of life of all the basest.

42 **Phao.** Yet content, Madam, which is a kind of life of all the best.

44 **Sapho.** Wilt thou forsake the ferry, and follow the court as a page?

46 **Phao.** As it pleaseth Fortune, Madam, to whom I am a prentice.

48 **Sapho.** Come, let us go.

50 **Trach.** Will you go, Pandion?

52 **Pand.** Yea.

54

56

[Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE III.

A Street.

Enter Molus and Criticus, meeting.

1 **Molus.** Criticus comes in good time; I shall not be
2 alone. – What news, Criticus?

4 **Crit.** I taught you that lesson, to ask what news, and
this is the news: tomorrow there shall be a desperate
6 fray between two, made at all weapons, from the
brown bill to the bodkin.

8

10 **Molus.** Now thou talkest of frays, I pray thee, what is
that whereof they talk so commonly in court – valour,
the stab, the pistol – for the which every man that
12 dareth is so much honoured?

38: Phao wishes he had never seen Sapho: he appears to have just fallen in love.
would = wish.

40-41: **in a trade...basest** = ie. working in the meanest of all professions.

= usually emended to **thy**.

49-50: ie. Phao goes along with whatever fate has in store for him.

a prentice = ie. an apprentice.

Entering Characters: once again we meet **Molus** (the servant of **Pandion** the scholar) and **Criticus** (the servant of the courtier **Trachinus**). Molus is trying to learn the ropes of serving as a page in the queen's court.

= see Act I.iii.42-44.

5-7: **tomorrow...bodkin** = Criticus announces the upcoming duel between two members of the court.

= ie. with any and all weapons permitted, ie. a no-holds-barred contest.

7: **brown bill** = an English pole-weapon, traditionally employed by watchmen, and possessing a combination axe-head and spear-point at one end.¹

bodkin = sharp-pointed dagger.¹

9-12 (below): Molus asks Criticus to explain the meaning of some of the lingo he has overheard in court. He has been hearing people praise the courage of those who challenge others to duels.

= ie. now that. = ie. "please tell me".

= of which.

= challenges (another).

14 **Crit.** Oh Molus, beware of valour! He that can look
big, and wear his dagger pommel lower than the point;

16 that lieth at a good ward, and can hit a button with a

thrust; and will into the field man to man for a bout or

18 two: he, Molus, is a shrewd fellow and shall be well-
followed.

20 **Molus.** What is the end?
22 **Crit.** Danger or death.
24 **Molus.** If it be but death that bringeth all this
26 commendation, I account him as valiant that is killed
with a surfeit, as with a sword.
28 **Crit.** How so?
30 **Molus.** If I venture upon a full stomach to eat a rasher
32 on the coals, a carbonado, drink a carouse, swallow all
things that may procure sickness or death, am not I as
34 valiant to die so in a house, as the other in a field?

Methinks that epicures are as desperate as soldiers,

36 and cooks provide as good weapons as cutlers.

38 **Crit.** Oh valiant knight!
40 **Molus.** I will die for it: what greater valour?
42 **Crit.** Scholars fight, who rather seek to choke their
stomachs, than see their blood.
44 **Molus.** I will stand upon this point: if it be valour to
46 dare die, he is valiant howsoever he dieth.

= martial courage.¹

15: **big** = fierce.¹

wear...point = a threatening way of wearing one's **dagger**, with the **point** directed upward; the **pommel** is a knob at the end of the handle, ie. the opposite end of the dagger's point.^{1,3}

16: **that lieth...ward** = who is able to maintain a skillful defensive position.

16-17: **can hit...thrust** = is a skilled fencer who can accurately strike even a very small target.

17-18: **into the...two** = briefly, willingly engage in a duel. **the field** = a dueling ground.

a bout or two = a round or two; apparently ironic allusion to a vicious fight; this expression appears to have been invented by Lyly here, and was adopted by later writers.

18: **shrewd** = wily, artful, cunning.^{1,2}

18-19: **well-followed** = attended by a large number of admirers.

21: "what is the purpose or point of all of this?"

= credit or general approval.¹ = judge.

= overeating or drinking.

31: **venture** = dare.

31-32: **rasher on the coals** = grilled strip of bacon.¹
= hunk of cross-cut grilled meat.^{1,9} = full cup of liquor.

= bring on.

= ie. dueling ground, location of combat.

35: **epicures** = gourmets, so-called from the philosophy of the Greek Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), who argued that pleasure is the only worthwhile pursuit in life.¹ We may note that the other half of his belief-system, that pleasure should be sought with moderation, is usually forgotten.

desperate = reckless (with their lives).¹

= makers of swords.

42-43: Criticus suggests that academics are cowardly.

choke their stomachs = ie. overeat.

= maintain.

48	Crit. Well, <u>of this hereafter</u> : but here cometh Calypho, <u>we will have some sport</u> .	= ie. "we will speak more of this later." = Criticus plans to use further sophistry to toy with Calypho.
50		
	<i>Enter Calypho.</i>	Entering Character: <i>Calypho</i> is a Cyclops , one of the well-known mythological one-eyed monsters who served as workmen in the forge of Vulcan, the blacksmith god.
52		53-60 (below): a bit of a smart-aleck, Calypho remarks on the disadvantages Vulcan has incurred in marrying Venus. Calypho has been sent by Vulcan to find Venus.
	Caly. My mistress, I think, <u>hath got a gadfly</u> : never at	53-54: My mistress...abroad = Venus is difficult to track down, as she is always on the go. hath got a gadfly = metaphorically, is possessed with a wanderlust; the allusion is to the myth of Io , an unfortunate target of the lusty Jupiter's eye. Juno , the jealous wife of the king of the gods, turned Io into a cow, then assigned a gadfly (a type of parasitic fly) ¹ to torment her, driving Io to wander all over Europe and Asia. ¹⁰ abroad (line 54) = out and about.
54	home, and yet none can tell where abroad. <u>My master was a wise man</u> when he <u>matched with</u> such a woman.	= ie. Vulcan. = Calypho is sarcastic. = married.
56	When she comes in, we must put out the fire, because of the smoke; hang up our hammers, because of the noise; and do no work, but <u>watch what she wanteth</u> .	= cater to her every need.
58	She is fair, but <u>by my troth</u> I <u>doubt of her honesty</u> . I	59: by my troth = truly, "I swear". doubt of her honesty = "suspect her chastity", ie. Calypho believes Venus regularly cheats on Vulcan.
60	must seek her, <u>that I fear Mars hath found</u> .	= another reference to Mars' famous affair with Venus.
62	Crit. Whom dost thou seek?	
64	Caly. I have found those I seek not.	
66	Molus. I hope you have found those which are <u>honest</u> .	= Molus uses honest in the modern sense, but Calypho's response takes honest in its other common meaning of "chaste".
68	Caly. It may be, but <u>I seek no such</u> .	= ie. "the one I am seeking (ie. Venus) is not chaste."
70	Molus. Criticus, you shall see me by learning to prove Calypho to be the devil.	70-71: Molus will use a scholar's sophistry to prove an obviously absurd proposition.
72		
74	Crit. Let us see; but I pray thee, prove it better than thou didst thyself to be valiant.	
76	Molus. Calypho, I will prove thee to be the devil.	
78	Caly. Then will I swear thee to be a god.	
80	Molus. The devil is black.	80: Medieval artwork often depicted the devil as black, and Renaissance literature often described the devil as black.
82	Caly. What care I?	
84	Molus. Thou art <u>black</u> .	= swarthy.
86	Caly. What care you?	86: ie. "so what?"

88	Molus. Therefore thou art the devil.	
90	Caly. I deny that.	
92	Molus. It is the <u>conclusion</u> , thou must not deny it.	= a term from logic.
94	Caly. In spite of all conclusions, I will deny it.	
96	Crit. Molus, the smith holds you hard.	96: ie. Calypho (himself a blacksmith) has stopped Molus in his tracks.
98	Molus. Thou seest he hath no <u>reason</u> .	= ie. ability to engage in exercises of logic.
100	Crit. Try him again.	
102	Molus. I will reason with thee now <u>from a place</u> .	102: Molus will employ a new tautology to prove Calypho is a demon. <i>from a place</i> = Bond tells us that this is an expression from logic, meaning that the debater will prove an argument using a familiar proverb or Biblical passage as a starting point.
104	Caly. I mean to answer you <u>in no other place</u> .	= ie. "right here."
106	Molus. Like master, like <u>man</u> .	106: proverbial: a servant (<i>man</i>) will resemble his master.
108	Caly. It may be.	
110	Molus. But thy master hath horns.	110: Molus means that Vulcan is a cuckold: the allusion is to the familiar horns that were said to grow on a man's forehead when his wife cheats on him.
112	Caly. And so mayst thou.	112: ie. Molus too may be cuckolded one day. ⁶
114	Molus. Therefore, thou hast horns, and <u>ergo</u> a devil.	= "therefore (you are)". The Latin word <i>ergo</i> is another term from logic.
116	Caly. Be they all devils <u>have</u> horns?	= ie. who have.
118	Molus. All men that have horns are.	
120	Caly. Then are there <u>mo</u> devils on earth than in hell.	120: a seeming joke about the ubiquity of cuckolded men. <i>mo</i> = more, a common variant.
122	Molus. But what dost thou answer?	
124	Caly. I deny that.	
126	Molus. What?	
128	Caly. Whatsoever it is, that shall prove me a devil.	
130	But hearest thou, scholar, I am a plain fellow, and can <u>fashion</u> nothing but with the hammer. What wilt thou say, if I prove thee <u>a</u> smith?	= create, make. = ie. to be a.
132	Molus. Then will I say thou art a scholar.	
134	Crit. Prove it, Calypho, and I will give thee a good <u>colaphum</u> .	= Latin for "blow" or "buffet", especially on the cheek; an
136		

138 **Caly.** I will prove it or else –

140 **Crit.** Or else what?

142 **Caly.** Or else I will not prove it. Thou art a smith:
 144 therefore, thou art a smith. The conclusion, you say,
 must not be denied: and therefore it is true, thou art a
 smith.

146 **Molus.** Aye, but I deny your antecedent.

148 **Caly.** Aye, but you shall not. – Have I not touched
 150 him, Criticus?

152 **Crit.** You have both done learnedly: for as sure as he
 is a smith, thou art a devil.

154 **Caly.** And then he a devil, because a smith: for that it
 156 was his reason to make me a devil, being a smith.

158 **Molus.** There is no reasoning with these mechanical
 dolts, whose wits are in their hands, not in their heads.

160 **Crit.** Be not choleric: you are wise. But let us take up
 162 this matter with a song.

164 **Caly.** I am content, my voice is as good as my reason.

166 **Molus.** Then shall we have sweet music. But come, I
 will not break off.

168 [Song.]

170 **Crit.** *Merry knaves are we three-a,*

172 **Molus.** *When our songs do agree-a.*

174 **Caly.** *Oh now I well see-a*
 176 *What anon we shall be-a.*

178 **Crit.** *If we ply thus our singing,*

180 **Molus.** *Pots then must be flinging;*

182 **Caly.** *If the drink be but stinging,*

184 **Molus.** *I shall forget the rules of grammar,*

obvious pun on Calypho's name. Daniel notes that, based on his response, the Cyclops clearly does not recognize this foreign word.

147: Molus means that, if Calypho's premise (*antecedent*, another term from logic) is false, then his conclusion is not necessarily true.⁶

149-150: *touched him* = figuratively wounded Molus, ie. "won the round".²

155-6: Calypho's unsophisticated logic is as follows:

- (1) "Molus proved that I am a devil, because I am a blacksmith;
- (2) I proved Molus is a blacksmith; therefore
- (3) Molus is a devil."

= vulgar or coarse,¹ an adjective used to malign those who are skilled in manual labour.

= angry.

= logic.

= begin (the song).¹

171-191 (below): the lads sing a drinking song.

= it was common in this era for poets to add an extra syllable to a word by tagging the suffix *-a* to its end.

= soon.

= burning.¹

184: if Molus gets drunk enough, he will forget those things a scholar should know well.

186 *Caly.* And I the pit-a-pat of my hammer.

188 *All.* To the tap-house then let's gang and roar.
Call hard, 'tis rare to vamp a score.

190 Draw dry the tub, be it old or new,
 192 And part not till the ground look blue.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II, SCENE IV.

Before Sybilla's Cave.

Enter Phao.

1 *Phao.* What unacquainted thoughts are these, Phao,
 2 far unfit for thy thoughts: unmeet for thy birth, thy
 4 fortune, thy years, for Phao! Unhappy, canst thou not
 be content to behold the sun, but thou must covet to
build thy nest in the sun? Doth Sapho bewitch thee,

6 whom all the ladies in Sicily could not woo? Yea, poor
 Phao, the greatness of thy mind is far above the beauty
 8 of thy face, and the hardness of thy fortune beyond the
 bitterness of thy words. Die, Phao, Phao, die: for there
 10 is no hope if thou be wise; nor safety, if thou be

186: "and I shall forget the skills of a blacksmith."
pit-a-pat = while this bit of onomatopoeia is mostly applied today to describe the sound made by falling rain or one's heart or feet, we find that in the early 16th and 17th centuries, *pit-a-pat* was also used to describe the popping of muskets, the bestowing of numerous kisses, and even, in one bizarre citation, "*Diana's buttocks went so fast pit-a-pat when she was driven to Heaven.*"

= ale-house, tavern. = go. = drunkenly revel.

189: *Call hard* = demand (drinks).
rare = fine.
vamp a score = add drinks to the tavern bill.³
score = reference to the marks or tallies drawn in chalk by a tapster to keep track of the liquor consumed by those patrons who were receiving their booze on credit.

= ie. basically, drink the keg of ale dry.
 = expression used in the 16th and 17th centuries to describe an extreme state of drunkenness.

Entering Character: our ferryman *Phao* begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy of 411 words. As with many of the longer monologues in this play, we have broken up this speech into separate paragraphs to facilitate reading.

1-11 (below): having fallen desperately in love with Sapho, Phao recognizes the impossibility of his situation: a mere labourer has no business courting a queen!

= ie. thoughts Phao has never entertained before.⁵
 = inappropriate for one who was born into a lower class.
 = ill-fated and miserable.¹
 = metaphorically Sapho. = desire.

5: *build thy nest in the sun* = early version of the modern expression, "build castles in the air": to envision an unrealistic or unattainable goal.
Doth Sapho...thee = whenever Elizabethan characters fall in love with those who are unsuited for them, they often accuse the targets of their love of *bewitching* them.

= ie. because Phao has, until this moment, scorned to get involved with a woman.
 = pride¹ or hubris.⁶
 = cruelty.

9: *Die, Phao, Phao, die* = an example of a favourite figure of speech of Lyly's, known as *antimetabole*, in which a

fortunate.

12 Ah, Phao, the more thou seekest to suppress those
13 mounting affections, they soar the loftier, and the
14 more thou wrastlest with them, the stronger they
15 wax; not unlike unto a ball, which, the harder it is
16 thrown against the earth, the higher it boundeth into
17 the air; or our Sicilian stone, which groweth hardest by
18 hammering.

19 Oh divine love! and therefore divine, because
20 love, whose deity no conceit can compass, and

therefore no authority can constrain; as miraculous

22 in working as mighty, and no more to be suppressed

23 than comprehended. – How now, Phao, whither art
24 thou carried, committing idolatry with that god,
whom thou hast cause to blaspheme?

26 Oh Sapho! fair Sapho! – peace, miserable wretch,
enjoy thy care in covert, wear willow in thy hat,

28 and bays in thy heart. Lead a lamb in thy hand,

and a fox in thy head; a dove on the back of thy hand,

30 and a sparrow in the palm. Gold boileth best when
31 it bubbleth least; water runneth smoothest, where
32 it is deepest. Let thy love hang at thy heart's bottom,
not at the tongue's brim. Things untold are undone;

34 there can be no greater comfort than to know much,
nor any less labour, than to say nothing. –

phrase is repeated in reverse order.¹

9-11: **for there...fortunate** = on the one hand, if Phao is wise, he will not pursue Sapho, but this will leave him unfulfilled in love; on the other hand, if he is lucky and wins Sapho, he will find himself in a dangerous relationship indeed!

= rising or growing passions. = higher.

= ie. *wrastlest*, a very common alternate form.

= grow.

= bounces.

17-18: **our Sicilian...hammering** = another invention of our author's.

= whose god (ie. Cupid) no one has the imagination to fully comprehend (*compass*).¹

= no one has the power to prevent Cupid from shooting his arrows at his victims: a metaphor for the inability of even the most rational individuals to avoid falling in love.

= ie. as he is.

23-25: **whither...blaspheme** = Phao recognizes that he has lost control of his emotions, berating himself for venerating the god he should be cursing!

whither = to where.

26-35 (below): Phao hopes to be able to manage his growing attraction for Sapho by deemphasizing or ignoring it.

= "calm down"; Phao addresses himself.

27: **enjoy thy care in covert** = love Sapho in secret.

wear willow in thy hat = the *willow* was a symbol of unrequited love.

28: **bays in thy heart** = Lyly employs the leaves of the bay tree (*bays*) as another symbol of unattained love, and also possibly poetry.^{3,6} The allusion is to the story of the maiden **Daphne**, who, pursued by the amorous god **Apollo**, prayed for escape from above; having heard her pleas, the gods turned her into a bay tree. Lyly frequently depicts Apollo as mourning for his lost love.

28-29: **Lead a lamb...head** = the lamb is the symbol of gentleness, the fox of cunning.^{1,6}

29-30: **a dove...palm** = the faithful and sincere love represented by the *dove* may be exhibited openly, but the lecherous yearnings symbolized by the *sparrow* should be concealed (Bevington, p. 241).⁶

30-33: **Gold...brim** = Phao employs two additional analogies to convince himself that, in order to subdue the love raging in his breast, he must act and appear outwardly collected, not revealing his tumultuous emotions!

tongue's brim = tip of the tongue.¹

35: is there anything easier to do than to say nothing?

36 But ah, thy beauty, Sapho, thy beauty! – Beginnest
thou to blab? – Aye, blab it, Phao, as long as thou
38 blabbest her beauty. Bees that die with honey are

buried with harmony; swans that end their lives with
40 songs are covered when they are dead with flowers;

and they that till their latter gasp commend beauty,
42 shall be ever honoured with benefits.

In these extremities, I will go to none other oracle
44 than Sybilla, whose old years have not been idle in
these young attempts, and whose sound advice may
46 mitigate (though the heavens cannot remove) my
miseries. Oh Sapho! sweet Sapho! Sapho! – Sybilla?

48 [Sybilla appears in the mouth of the cave.]

50 **Syb.** Who is there?

52 **Phao.** One not worthy to be one.

54 **Syb.** Fair Phao?

56 **Phao.** Unfortunate Phao!

58 **Syb.** Come in.

60 **Phao.** So I will; and quite thy tale of Phoebus with

62 one whose brightness darkeneth Phoebus. I love

Sapho, Sybilla; Sapho, ah Sapho, Sybilla!

64 **Syb.** A short tale, Phao, and a sorrowful; it asketh pity
rather than counsel.

68 **Phao.** So it is, Sybilla: yet in those firm years,
methinketh there should harbour such experience as
70 may defer, though not take away, my destiny.

72 **Syb.** It is hard to cure that by words which cannot be
eased by herbs; and yet, if thou wilt take advice, be
74 attentive.

76 **Phao.** I have brought mine ears of purpose, and will
hang at your mouth till you have finished your
78 discourse.

38: *blabbest her beauty* = speak copiously about Sapho's
beauty.

38-42: *Bees...benefits* = Phao's animal analogies support
his point that those who die with compliments on their lips
will be rewarded with honour.

39-40: *swans...flowers* = allusion to the very old belief that
swans sing before they die.

= until. = last. = extol.

= "advising the young on their efforts to find love".⁶

= ie. to live.⁶

= Phao will repay (*quite*) Sybilla's sad story of Apollo
(*Phoebus*) with his own tale of woe.

= ie. a story about Sapho, whose beauty Phao describes as
so brilliant that it actually outshines the sun; *Phoebus*, an
alternate name for the sun-god Apollo, is equated with the
sun itself here.

= ie. a lamentable one.

68-70: Phao hopes that Sybilla, who with her great age has
extensive experience helping those in similar trouble, can
assist Phao to at least put off (*defer*) whatever trouble fate
has in store for him, if not change his destiny completely.

in those firm years = Bevington suggests, "possessing the
stability and wisdom of age" (p. 243).⁶

= ie. folk remedies made from herbs.

= deliberately, ie. in order to hear out Sybilla.

80 *Syb.* Love, fair child, is to be governed by art, as thy
 82 boat by an oar; for fancy, though it cometh by hazard,
 84 is ruled by wisdom. If my precepts may persuade (and
 I pray thee, let them persuade), I would wish thee first
 to be diligent, for that women desire nothing more
 than to have their servants officious. Be always in
 86 sight, but never slothful. Flatter, – I mean lie: little
 things catch light minds, and fancy is a worm that
 88 feedeth first upon fennel. Imagine with thyself all are
 to be won: otherwise mine advice were as unnecessary
 90 as thy labour. It is impossible for the brittle metal of
 92 women to withstand the flattering attempts of men;
 only this, let them be asked: their sex requireth no less,
 their modesties are to be allowed so much.
 94 Be prodigal in praises and promises: beauty must
 have a trumpet, and pride a gift. Peacocks never spread
 96 their feathers but when they are flattered, and gods
 are seldom pleased if they be not bribed. There is none

79-154 (below): in a pair of rambling – and lengthy – speeches, Sybilla, perhaps distracted by the memory of her own pathetic story, dispenses a seemingly interminable string of pithy, sometimes trite, and occasionally even contradictory, pieces of advice to her lovelorn listener. The second speech, at 502 words, is especially numbing.

Quite a large number of Sybilla's precepts are borrowed from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*); see Bevington, pp. 243-9, for an inventory of the adopted maxims.⁶

= beautiful. = must be managed skillfully.

= love. = by chance.¹

= instructions.¹

= implore.

= watchful, assiduous. = because.

= their lovers (*servants*) be zealously attentive.

86: *slothful* = negligent in showering attention.

86-87: *little...minds* = expression used to suggest that foolish people are easily amused by childish things:¹ here, referring to compliments, which, like traps, easily *catch* a woman's attention, which in turn then blossoms into attraction.

light (line 87) = frivolous.¹

87-88: *fancy...fennel* = metaphorically, love (*fancy*) grows when one is flattered. Lyly seems to have combined two allusions here:

(1) Pliny (20.95) states that the snake (*worm*) will eat *fennel* to sharpen its eyesight, and

(2) Lyly uses *fennel* as a metaphor for flattery. The OED tells us this trope originated with our author, but the idea may have been suggested to Lyly in a 1582 work, in which was written, "*Yet some will say, that Fennill is to flatter*"). The metaphor was adopted by later writers as well.

88-89: *Imagine...to be won* = Sybilla anticipates a modern technique for success, recommending that Phao envision how all women are available for him to win.

= ie. frail constitution or make-up; *metal* = mettle.

92-93: *only this...much* = having said all that, Phao should be careful not to force himself onto his target: a woman likes to think that she is the one choosing her mate.

94: *prodigal* = lavish.

94-95: *beauty must have a trumpet* = a woman needs to have her loveliness loudly extolled! an exceptional metaphor.

= except.

97: *if they be not bribed* = ie. if they are not regularly propitiated with sacrifices and gifts.

97-98: *none so foul* = "no woman so ugly".

98 so foul that thinketh not herself fair. In commending,
 100 thou canst lose no labour, for, of everyone, thou shalt
 102 be believed. – Oh, simple women! that are brought
 104 rather to believe what their ears hear of flattering men,
 106 than what their eyes see in true glasses!

108 **Phao.** You digress, only to make me believe that
 women do so lightly believe.

110 **Syb.** Then to the purpose. Choose such times to break
 112 thy suit, as thy lady is pleasant. The wooden horse
 entered Troy when the soldiers were quaffing; and

114 Penelope, forsooth, whom fables make so coy, among
 the pots wrong her wooers by the fists when she
 loured on their faces.

Grapes are mind-glasses. Venus worketh in Bacchus'
press, and bloweth fire upon his liquor. When thou

116 talkest with her, let thy speech be pleasant, but not
 incredible. Choose such words as may (as many may)

118 melt her mind. Honey rankleth when it is eaten for
 pleasure, and fair words wound when they are heard

98-99: **In commending...labour** = time spent praising a woman is never wasted!
 = ie. by all women.⁶

= from.
 = ie. mirrors that show women what they really look like!

104-5: Phao is incredulous to think that women are so shallow.
You digress = Phao points out that with her last three lines, Sybilla seems to have deviated from the true subject at hand: to help Phao!
lightly = easily.

107-8: **Choose...pleasant** = Phao should make sure to commence wooing Sapho only when she is in a good or receptive mood!

108-9: **The wooden...quaffing** = ie. one must choose one's timing carefully. The **Trojan War** ended when the Greeks tricked the defenders of Troy into admitting the famous giant **wooden horse**, which was filled with Greek soldiers primed to attack, into the city; thinking the war was over, the Trojans celebrated, drinking themselves city-wide into unconsciousness; it was at this point that the wily Greeks exited the horse, and slaughtered the city's population.

110-2: **Penelope...faces** = the wife of **Ulysses** (whose trip home from the **Trojan War** was delayed by a full decade), **Penelope** was forced to fend off a hundred suitors who assumed her husband must be dead. Sybilla, a bit creatively, suggests that Penelope, who in myth was portrayed as being modest, actually encouraged her pursuers by tightly grasping their hands (**fists**), even as she frowned on them, once she had gotten a bit tipsy (see Bevington, p. 245).⁶
wrong = alternate form of **wrung**, largely obsolete by the late 16th century, but used by Lyly here and in *Euphues*.

113: **Grapes are mind-glasses** = a seeming recommendation to get Sapho drunk: when one is drunk, one speaks what is truly on one's mind; a pedestrian version of the famous Latin maxim, *in vino veritas* (in wine there is truth). We note that Lyly had also used this same conceit in *Euphues*, in which he wrote, "*Wine is the glass of the mind.*"
glasses = mirrors.
 113-4: **Venus...liquor** = metaphorically supporting the previous point, Sybilla notes that love can be promoted through drink. The literal meaning here is that **Venus**, as the goddess of love, eagerly helps the god of wine **Bacchus** to work his **wine-press**, infusing it with passion (**fire**).

115-6: **but not incredible** = but do not say anything she won't believe.

117: **melt her mind** = ie. break her resistance down.
 117-9: **Honey...for love** = a warning for Phao not to impose himself on Sapho too intemperately. Lyly had written in *Euphues* that "*honey taken excessively cloyeth the stomach, though it be honey*", ie. it makes one sick if too

120 for love. Write, and persist in writing: they read more than is written to them, and write less than they think.

122 In conceit study to be pleasant; in attire brave, but not too curious. When she smileth, laugh outright; if

124 rise, stand up; if sit, lie down. Lose all thy time to keep time with her.

126 Can you sing? shew your cunning. Can you dance? use your legs. Can you play upon any instrument? practice your fingers to please her fancy; seek out qualities.

130 If she seem at the first cruel, be not discouraged. I tell thee a strange thing: women strive because they would be overcome. "Force" they call it, but such a welcome force they account it, that continually they study to be enforced.

134 To fair words join sweet kisses, which if they gently receive – I say no more, they will gently receive.

136 But be not pinned always on her sleeves: strangers have green rushes, when daily guests are not

138 worth a rush. Look pale, and learn to be lean, that

140 whoso seeth thee may say, "the gentleman is in love." Use no sorcery to hasten thy success: wit is a witch.

142 Ulysses was not fair, but wise; not cunning in charms but sweet in speech; whose filed tongue made those enamoured that sought to have him enchanted. Be not

much is eaten, even though it is delicious.

rankleth = poisons or inflicts pain.¹

119-120: **they read...to them** = women naturally read more into a lover's letter than what is actually written.
= on the other hand, women modestly resist putting their true feelings into written words.

121: **In conceit...pleasant** = "strive to be delightful in how you express yourself."¹

121-2: **in attire...curious** = dress well (**brave**), but not too fastidiously (**curious**).

123: **rise** = ie. she rises.

123-4: **Lose all...with her** = a musical metaphor: "be diligent to match the movements of your lady."

= show your ability.

127-8: **seek out qualities** = find things to do that will entertain and impress her; **qualities** = skills.

130-3: **women strive...enforced** = women act to fight off their suitors because they want them to be aggressive.

= endeavor to be overcome.¹

= tenderly.¹

= Sybilla does not feel it necessary to explain what warmly-received kisses will lead to!

136-8: **But be not...rush** = Sybilla seemingly contradicts herself: "do not be too familiar to her, so as to jade her, because someone new may come along and grab her attention."

be not pinned...sleeves = the OED cites this line to mean, "do not become too reliant or smitten with her."

The lines refer to the custom of strewing fresh, or **green, rushes**, which have a pleasant and sweet odour, onto one's floors when important or special guests are expected; hence, the idea is that new arrivals get more attention.

137-8: **not worth a rush** = very common expression, used to describe anything of little or no value.

= Phao should adopt the traditional physical manifestations of one desperately in love: a countenance pale from anxiety over whether one's feelings are reciprocated, leading to an inability to eat.

140: "do not take shortcuts: your cleverness and intelligence will woo her successfully in due time."

141-3: **Ulysses...enchanted** = though not an attractive man, **Ulysses** was a skilled orator, which led to women falling for him. The allusion is to the sorceress **Circe**, who famously turned Ulysses' companions into pigs after he landed on her island during his trip home from Troy. Ulysses possessed a special herb which prevented Circe from harming him (hence, **that sought to have him enchanted**). Circe fell in

144 coy: bear, sooth, swear, die to please thy lady.

146 These are rules for poor lovers; to others I am no
mistress. He hath wit enough, that can give enough.
148 Dumb men are eloquent, if they be liberal. Believe me,
great gifts are little gods.

When thy mistress doth bend her brow, do not thou

150 bend thy fist. Cammocks must be bowed with sleight,

not strength; water to be trained with pipes, not stopped
152 with sluices; fire to be quenched with dust, not with
swords.

154 If thou have a rival, be patient: art must wind him

156 out, not malice; time, not might; her change, and
thy constancy. Whatsoever she wareth, swear it

158 becomes her. In thy love be secret. Venus' coffers,
though they be hollow, never sound, and when they
seem emptiest, they are fullest.

160 Old fool that I am! to do thee good, I begin to dote,

love with her guest, and induced him to remain with her for
a full year before he re-embarked for home.
filed tongue = metaphor for one whose speech is elo-
quent.¹

144: *coy* = shy, hard-to-get.
bear = perhaps, "bring her gifts", or "put up with her",
e.g., her mood swings, etc.
sooth = "humour her".¹

145-8: men with money do not need Sybilla's advice on
how to win women with words or manners, because they
can easily obtain lovers through the generous (*liberal*)
bestowal of gifts.

149-150: *When thy...fist* = a wooer must not respond with
threats or violence when his beloved is angry (she *bends*
her brow).
150: *bend thy fist* = expression used to describe the
hand preparing to strike.

150-3: *Cammocks...swords* = using sundry analogies,
Sybilla makes the point that women must be managed and
won through craft, not force.
150-1: *Cammocks...strength* = the tree known as the
cammock naturally grows crooked, but its twisted shape can
be encouraged and intensified through careful tending, so
that it may serve as a staff or crook.^{1,3,9}
sleight = cunning, artifice.

= conducted, ie. controlled.
= dams.

154-6: *If thou...constancy* = one must be patient if a *rival*
appears on the scene.
154-5: *art must wind him out* = the wooer must use
cunning to extricate the rival from the scene. The expression
to wind one (or oneself) out of a situation was a common
one.

155: *might* = force.
155-6: *her change, and thy constancy* = with patience,
your beloved's favour will return to you, especially when
combined with your faithfulness to her.

157-9: *Venus'...fullest* = a difficult passage, adapted from
Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*,⁶ in which the Roman advised that
love-making should be done in secret: "*If the mysteries of*
Venus are not enclosed in chests, and the hollow cymbals do
not resound with frantic blows; although among ourselves
they are celebrated by universal custom, yet it is in such a
manner that among us they demand concealment."¹⁶
We may note that in succeeding works, Elizabethan
writers such as Robert Greene, and even Lyly himself,
employed the conceit that "Venus' coffers must be full" to
mean that a wooer must be willing to spend money if he
wants to win his girl.

= talk stupidly or foolishly.¹

162 and counsel that which I would have concealed. Thus,
Phao, have I given thee certain regards, no rules, only
164 to set thee in the way, not to bring thee home.

166 **Phao.** Ah, Sybilla, I pray go on, that I may glut
myself in this science.

168 **Syb.** Thou shalt not surfeit, Phao, whilst I diet thee.

170 Flies that die on the honeysuckle become poison to
bees. A little in love is a great deal.

172 **Phao.** But all that can be said not enough.

174 **Syb.** White silver draweth black lines, and sweet
words will breed sharp torments.

176

178 **Phao.** What shall become of me?

178

180 **Syb.** Go dare.

180

[*Sybilla exits into cave.*]

182

184 **Phao.** I go! – Phao, thou canst but die; and then as
good die with great desires, as pine in base fortunes.

186

[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT II.

= ie. Sybilla has given away women's secrets.⁶

= considerations, ie. guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

163: metaphorically, to put Phao on the path which may help him to win Sapho, but it is up to Phao to implement these precepts.

= knowledge.⁶

168: *surfeit* = overeat (on her wisdom), continuing Phao's metaphor with *glut*.
diet = feed.

= ie. small bit of advice.

174-5: an action which is expected to bring one result can often cause the opposite to occur. The observation regarding *white silver* was proverbial.

will breed sharp torments = cause acute misery.

= ie. "be brave and go find out."

183-4: *as good* = ie. "it is better to".

= "than to remain in distress (to *pine*) due to ill luck or fate."

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Ante-room of Sapho's Chamber.

*Enter Trachinus, Pandion, Mileta, Ismena,
Criticus and Molus.*

1 **Trach.** Sapho is fallen suddenly sick. I cannot guess
2 the cause.

4 **Mileta.** Some cold belike, or else a woman's qualm.

6 **Pand.** A strange nature of cold, to drive one into such
8 an heat.

10 **Mileta.** Your physic, sir, I think be of the second sort;
12 else would you not judge it rare, that hot fevers are
14 engendered by cold causes.

16 **Pand.** Indeed, lady, I have no more physic than will
18 purge choler; and that if it please you, I will practice

upon you. It is good for women that be waspish.

20 **Is.** Faith, sir, no; you are best purge your own
22 melancholy: belike you are a male-content.

24 **Pand.** It is true, and are not you a female-content?

26 **Trach.** Soft! I am not content, that a male and female
28 content should go together.

30 **Mileta.** Ismena is disposed to be merry.

32 **Is.** No, it is Pandion would fain seem wise.

34 **Trach.** You shall not fall out; for pigeons, after biting,
36 fall to billing, and open jars make the closest jests.

Enter Eugenua.

38 **Eug.** Mileta! Ismena! Mileta! come away! my lady is
40 in a sowne!

= bedroom, boudoir.

Entering Characters: we once again meet our courtier **Trachinus**, our scholar **Pandion**, and **Mileta** and **Ismena**, two of Sapho's ladies-in-waiting.

= probably. = fainting fit or nausea.¹

= fever.¹

= ie. skill in medical science.¹ = an inferior kind.

= unusual.

= produced.¹

14: **purge choler** = rid one of his or her ill-temper, or **choler** (ie. yellow bile), one of the four bodily fluids which were traditionally believed to determine one's temperament based on the proportion in which they appear in the human body. A preponderance of **choler** was thought to lead to an irritable disposition.

14-15: **I will practice upon you** = Pandion offers to treat Mileta, indirectly accusing her of being irascible.

= ie. Pandion's treatment is an effective cure for petulant or spiteful women.¹

18: **melancholy** = depression or sullenness, the result of having too much black bile, another humour.
male-content = a good pun from Ismena.

22-23: Trachinus, continuing the banter, claims it is not a good idea for a couple comprised of two malcontents to get talking. He explains at lines 29-30 below.

= be delighted to.¹

29-30: Trachinus warns Pandion and Ismena not to argue (**fall out**), because it will lead to them making up!

billing = cooing bill-to-bill, the avian version of kissing.
open jars...jests = "unconcealed hostility resolves to the friendliest good feeling" (Daniel, p.364);⁴ **jars** = quarreling.¹

= ie. in a swoon; **sowne** was more commonly used than **swoon** in the 16th century.

38	Mileta. Aye me!	
40	Ism. Come, let us make haste.	
42	[<i>Exeunt Eugenua, Mileta, and Ismena.</i>]	41: the ladies-in-waiting exit the stage, leaving the men behind.
44	Trach. I am sorry for Sapho, because she will take no <u>physic</u> ; like you, Pandion, who, being sick of the	44: <i>physic</i> = medicine. 44-45: <i>sick of the sullens</i> = in ill-humour or sulking. = ie. remedy.
46	sullens, will seek no <u>friend</u> .	
48	Pand. <u>Of men</u> we learn to speak, of Gods to hold our	47-49: Pandion expounds on the value of remaining silent. Bond wonders if perhaps our scholar has guessed Sapho's secret – she is lovesick – but feels it is wiser not to discuss it. <i>Of men</i> = from other people.
	peace. <u>Silence shall disgest what folly hath swallowed,</u>	48: <i>Silence...swallowed</i> = metaphorically, a penchant for proving oneself foolish can be suppressed by keeping quiet. <i>disgest</i> = digest, a common alternate form.
	and wisdom <u>wean</u> what <u>fancy</u> hath <u>nursed</u> .	49: and while one may indulge in capricious or imaginative ideas (<i>fancy</i>), one must ultimately be guided by one's good sense. A nice suckling metaphor. <i>nursed</i> = breast-fed, hence fostered. ¹ <i>wean</i> = withdraw from suckling.
50		
52	Trach. Is it not love?	51: Trachinus too now guesses the source of Sapho's malady.
54	Pand. If it were, what then?	
56	Trach. Nothing, but that I hope it be not.	
58	Pand. Why, in <u>courts</u> there is nothing more common. And as <u>to be bald among the Micanians</u> , it was	= royal courts. = Pliny (11.47) is the source of the belief that the residents of the Greek island of Mykonos were all bald.
60	accounted no shame, because they were all bald; so to	
62	be in love among courtiers it <u>is no discredit, for that</u>	= brings no disrepute. = because.
64	they are all in love.	
	Trach. Why, what do you think of our ladies?	
	Pand. <u>As of the Seres wool</u> , which being [the] whitest	65: <i>As of</i> = ie. "the same way as I feel about". <i>Seres wool</i> = wool from some indeterminate part of East Asia, where the silk industry was believed to have originated. ¹ Lyly refers to the " <i>fine wool of Seres</i> " in a later play, <i>Endymion</i> .
66	and softest, <u>fretteth</u> soonest and deepest.	= wears away. ²
68	Trach. I will not tempt you in your deep melancholy,	
70	lest you seem sour to <u>those</u> which are so sweet. But	= ie. the ladies.
72	come, let us walk a little into the fields. It may be the	
74	open air will <u>disclose your close conceits</u> .	= "lead you to reveal your most secret thoughts."
	Pand. I will go with you; but send our pages away.	

[Exeunt.]

ACT III, SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter Criticus and Molus.

Entering Characters: another scene featuring *Criticus* (servant of the courtier **Trachinus**) and *Molus* (servant of the scholar **Pandion**) is presented for its comic relief.

1 **Crit.** What brown study art thou in, Molus? no mirth?
2 no life?

= state of gloomy musing.¹

4 **Molus.** I am in the depth of my learning driven to a
muse, how this Lent I shall scamble in the court, that

4ff (below): Molus has a problem: he loves food. When he was residing in Athens, working for Pandion at the university, it was easier to suffer a lean diet, because he lived amongst students and scholars who as a regular habit ate very little. But with the approach of Lent, when options for eating will be limited, Molus wonders how he will satisfy his hunger.

6 was wont to fast so oft in the university.

5: *muse* = ie. musing state (a noun).

Lent = a 40-day period of fasting, lasting from Ash Wednesday to near Easter. Here we see a most egregious example of an anachronism (having ancient Greeks observing a Christian rite) in Elizabethan drama, even within a literary form in which the authors regularly ignored historical accuracy and propriety.

scamble = shift, endure.¹

that = ie. "I who".

8 **Crit.** Thy belly is thy god.

= accustomed. = ie. often.

8: ie. "you are obsessed with eating."

10 **Molus.** Then is he a deaf god.

12 **Crit.** Why?

14 **Molus.** For venter non habet aures. But thy back is
16 thy god.

14: **Latin** = the belly has no ears, ie. "a hungry man will not take advice",¹¹ or "mere talk of food will not satisfy hunger."⁴

14-15: **thy back is thy god** = ie. Criticus loves to wear showy or fine clothes.³

Lyly used the same **belly vs. back** antithesis in his first play, *Campaspe*, in which the philosopher Diogenes complained of those who worship "*back-gods in the morning with pride, in the evening belly-gods with gluttony!*"

18 **Crit.** Then is it a blind god.

20 **Molus.** How prove you that?

Crit. Easy. *Nemo videt manticæ quod in tergo est.*

21: **Latin** = "no one sees the pouch (or wallet) that is on his own back," meaning that people do not see their own faults, even as they easily recognize those of others.⁴ This moral

22 **Molus.** Then would the satchel that hangs at your god,
 24 id est, your back, were full of meat to stuff my god,
 26 hoc est, my belly.

28 **Crit.** Excellent. But how canst thou study, when thy
 mind is only in the kitchen?

30 **Molus.** Doth not the horse travel best, that sleepeth
 with his head in the manger?

32 **Crit.** Yes, what then?

34 **Molus.** Good wits will apply. But what cheer is there
 36 here this Lent?

38 **Crit.** Fish.

40 **Molus.** I can eat none, it is wind.

42 **Crit.** Eggs.

44 **Molus.** I must eat none, they are fire.

46 **Crit.** Cheese.

48 **Molus.** It is against the old verse, *caseus est nequam*.

50 **Crit.** Yea, but it disgesteth all things except itself.

lesson is derived from one of Aesop's fables (#266 in the Perry Index), in which Prometheus, when he created humanity, gave all people two pouches to wear around their necks: the first, which contained other people's faults, to be worn in front, and the second, containing their own faults, to be born on their backs.³

= if only.
 = "that is". = food.
 = "that is".

27-28: *thy mind...kitchen* = Molus is always thinking about food.

30-31: *that sleepeth...manger* = ie. that can eat when it wants to.
manger = a trough of fodder.

35: *Good wits will apply* = those with perceptive minds will understand this maxim (ie. lines 30-31 above), and how it applies equally to people.

cheer = food and drink.

this Lent = the quartos' title page states that *Sapho and Phao* was performed before the queen on a Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent).

40: Bevington suggests that by *wind*, Molus means air, in its role as one of the four elements (the others being earth, fire and water): air was associated with the humour **blood** (each element being connected with a bodily humour), and so, what Molus is enigmatically saying is that eating fish will cause him to suffer from an imbalance in his humours, which would cause his disposition to become uneven (an excess amount of blood was thought to make one sanguine).

Bevington analyzes Molus' response to Criticus' next proposal (that he eat eggs) in a similar fashion: fire, another element, was associated with yellow bile, which, if a person possessed an excessive amount of it, was thought to make him or her choleric.

= bring on a burning passion; *eggs* were considered an aphrodisiac. We may note here that much 16th century literature actually identified *eggs* and *cheese* (Criticus' next suggestion) as prohibited menu items during Lent.

48: *against* = contrary to.

caseus est nequam = **Latin**: cheese is worthless. Bond traces the saying back to *Adagia*, the early 16th century collection of ancient sayings and proverbs compiled by the Dutch humanist Erasmus.

50: there seems to have been a belief that cheese was itself indigestible, even as it helped to digest other foods; a 1595 work attributes this idea to the ancient Greeks: "*it is sayd,*

52 **Molus.** Yea, but if a man hath nothing else to eat,
what shall it disgest?

54 **Crit.** You are disposed to jest. But if your silken throat

56 can swallow no packthread, you must pick your teeth,
and play with your trencher.

58 **Molus.** So shall I not incur the fulsome and
60 unmannerly sin of surfeiting. – But here cometh
62 Calypho.

Enter Calypho.

64 **Crit.** What news?

66 **Caly.** Since my being here, I have sweat like a dog to
68 prove my master a devil; he brought such reasons to
refel me as, I promise you, I shall like the better of his
70 wit, as long as I am with him.

72 **Molus.** How?

74 **Caly.** Thus, I always arguing that he had horns, and
therefore a devil, he said, “Fool, they are things like
76 horns, but no horns. For once in the senate of gods
being hold a solemn session, in the midst of their talk,

78 I put in my sentence, which was so indifferent, that
they all concluded it might as well have been left out
80 as put in, and so placed on each side of my head things

82 like horns, and called me a parenthesis.” Now, my
masters, this may be true, for I have seen it myself
about diverse sentences.

84 **Molus.** It is true, and the same did Mars make a full
86 point, that Vulcan's head was made a parenthesis.

that cheese is naught, and digesteth all things but it selfe.”
digesteth = disgest was a common alternate form of
digest.

55-56: *your silken...packthread* = Criticus suggests Molus
is a fastidious eater, or one used to snacking on delicacies, so
that his stomach cannot handle more commonplace food.⁴
packthread (line 56) = rough twine used for tying up
packages, etc.,¹ a metaphor for coarser foods.

56-57: *pick your...trencher* = ie. sit idly by, watching
everyone else eat; *trencher* = dish.

= in this manner. = reprehensible.¹

= allusion to gluttony as one of the seven deadly sins.

Entering Character: Vulcan's Cyclops-messenger *Calypho*
returns.

Having learned some sophistry from the boys back in
Act II.iii, Calypho has been trying to prove logically to his
master Vulcan that he (Vulcan) is a devil, but Vulcan is
having none of it.

65: note that Criticus is following his own precept: skipping
over pleasantries, he immediately inquires as to what is
going on.

= ie. "ever since I last left you here".

69: *refel* = refute.

69-70: *I shall...wit* = Calypho will think more highly
of Vulcan's intelligence in the future.

74-83 (below): Calypho's account of his debate with Vulcan
demonstrates that the blacksmith-god was as capable of
engaging in sophistry as anyone else.

= ie. because Vulcan was a cuckold.

= assembly.

= ie. there being held.

78-80: *I put...put in* = when Vulcan spoke out at the
assemblage, he was mocked for having made such an
irrelevant (*indifferent*) point.

sentence = in addition to its regular grammatical
meaning, *sentence* also meant "opinion" in this period.^{1,3}

82-83: *I have...sentences* = Calypho has seen these things
called *parentheses* in various (*diverse*) written sentences.

85-86: Mars, through his notorious affair with Venus, could
be said to be the source of the horns, or *parentheses*, on
Vulcan's head.

88 **Crit.** This shall go with me: I trust in Syracuse to give
 one or other a *parenthesis*.

90 **Molus.** Is Venus yet come home?

92 **Caly.** No, but were I Vulcan, I would by the gods –

94 **Crit.** What wouldest thou?

96 **Caly.** Nothing, but as Vulcan, halt by the gods.

98

100 **Crit.** I thought you would have hardly entreated
 Venus.

102 **Caly.** Nay, Venus is easily entreated; but let that go by.

104 **Crit.** What?

106 **Caly.** That which maketh so many *parenthesis*.

108 **Molus.** I must go by too, or else my master will not go
 by me, but meet me full with his fist. Therefore, if we
 110 shall sing, give me my part quickly: for if I tarry long,
 I shall cry my part woefully.

112 [Song.]

114 **Omnes.** *Arm, arm, the foe comes on apace.*

116 **Caly.** *What's that red nose and sulfury face?*

118

Molus. *'Tis the hot leader.*

120 **Crit.** *What's his name?*

122 **Molus.** *Bacchus, a captain of plump fame:*

124 *A goat the beast on which he rides,*

85-86: **make a full point** = "conclude".^{1,6} The expression **full point** usually referred to a punctuation mark used to terminate a sentence.¹

88-89: Criticus will make use of this information, expecting he will be able to give **parentheses**, ie. horns, to husbands throughout the city by cheating with their wives.⁶

97: **as** = like.

halt = both (1) limp (Vulcan **halts** because he is crippled), and (2) stop speaking (as Vulcan did at the meeting of the gods).³

99-100: **hardly entreated Venus** = vigorously or boldly begged Venus. Calypho responds by employing **easily** to pun with **hardly**.⁶

= let it pass, ie. "let us no longer discuss that."

106: ie. the topic of cuckoldry.

= get going, punning.

= ie. "shall thrash me."

111: ie. Molus anticipates being beaten. There is much alleged humour to be found in the era's dramas involving the beating of servants, a tradition that can be traced back to the ancient Roman comedies of Terence and Plautus.

115-162 (below): the song is a well-executed parody of a drinking party, disguised as an account of a military battle.

= swiftly.¹

117: Calypho inquires as to the identity of the approaching general, whose countenance betrays a heavy drinking habit.

sulfury = fiery,¹ ie. red from heavy drinking.

123: **Bacchus** = god of wine.

captain = military commander.

plump fame = perhaps, "great reputation"; Shakespeare referred to "**plumpy Bacchus**" in *Antony and Cleopatra*, but images of the god of wine did not typically show him as overweight.

124: ie. rather than riding a war-horse.

126	<i>Fat grunting swine run by his sides, His <u>standard-bearer</u> fears no knocks,</i>	126: <i>standard-bearer</i> = carrier of the unit's flag or pennant. <i>fears no knocks</i> = is not afraid of being struck or hit in any way.
	<i>For he's a drunken <u>butter-box</u>,</i>	= derogatory term for a Dutchman; the Dutch were thought to be both heavy drinkers and great consumers of butter. ^{1,5}
128	<i>Who when i' th' <u>red field</u> thus he <u>revels</u>, Cries, out "<u>ten tousan ton of tevils!</u>"</i>	= battlefield covered with blood. = drinks and feasts. = stereotyped Dutch accent.
130	<i>Caly. <u>What's he so swaggers in the <u>van</u>?</u></i>	= who is. = leading part of a travelling army.
132	<i>Molus. <u>Oh! that's a <u>roaring</u> Englishman,</u></i>	= boisterous, carousing. ^{1,4}
134	<i><u>Who in <u>deep healths</u> does so excel,</u></i>	= large quaffs drunk to other's good health.
136	<i><u>From Dutch and French he <u>bears the bell</u>.</u></i>	= takes first place, ie. is the best at drinking. ¹
138	<i>Crit. <u>What <u>vict'lers</u> follow Bacchus' camps?</u></i>	= victualers, ie. providers of an army's food and supplies.
	<i>Molus. <u>Fools, fiddlers, panders, pimps, and <u>ramps</u>.</u></i>	139: Molus lists the typical sorts of amusement-providers who can always be found attached to an army camp. <i>ramps</i> = wanton or flirtatious women. ^{1,4}
140	<i>Caly. <u>See, see, the battle now grows <u>hot</u>;</u></i>	= fierce, wild, unrestrained.
142	<i><u>Here legs <u>fly</u>, here goes heads <u>to the pot</u>,</u></i>	142: <i>Here legs fly</i> = ie. from being blown up. <i>here goes heads to the pot</i> = heads are smashed; the expression <i>to the pot</i> meant "destroyed" or "ruined". ¹
	<i><u>Here whores and knaves toss broken glasses,</u></i>	
144	<i><u>Here all the soldiers look like asses.</u></i>	
146	<i>Crit. <u>What man e'er heard such hideous noise?</u></i>	
148	<i>Molus. <u>Oh! that's the vintner's bawling boys.</u></i>	
	<i><u><u>Anon, anon</u>, the trumpets are,</u></i>	= "one moment!", the server's cry to impatient customers. ⁶
150	<i><u>Which call them <u>to the fearful bar</u>.</u></i>	= to rush to take part in the fight taking place at the defensive bulwark or barrier set up at the entrance to a city (<i>bar</i>); but also a pun on the expression, <i>called to the bar</i> , which refers to the moment when a law student is promoted to practicing barrister, by being invited to cross the barrier, or <i>bar</i> , separating the benchers from the students. ¹ <i>fearful</i> = dreadful, ie. that which causes fear.
152	<i>Caly. <u>Rush in, and let's our forces try.</u></i>	
154	<i>Molus. <u>Oh no, for see they <u>fly</u>, they fly!</u></i>	154: the enemy is fleeing! <i>fly</i> = flee.
156	<i>Crit. <u>And so will I.</u></i>	
158	<i>Caly. <u> And I.</u></i>	
160	<i>Molus. <u> And I.</u></i>	
162	<i>All. <u>'Tis a hot day in drink to die.</u></i>	
164		[<i>Exeunt.</i>]

ACT III, SCENE III.

Sapho's Chamber.

Sapho in her bed.

*Enter Mileta, Ismena, Canope, Eugenua,
Favilla, and Lamia.*

1 **Sapho.** Hey ho: I know not which way to turn me. Ah,
2 ah, I faint, I die.

4 **Mileta.** Madam, I think it good you have more clothes
and sweat it out.

6 **Sapho.** No, no, the best ease I find is to sigh it out.

8 **Ism.** A strange disease, that should breed such a
10 desire.

12 **Sapho.** A strange desire that hath brought such a
disease.

14 **Can.** Where, Lady, do you feel your most pain?

16 **Sapho.** Where nobody else can feel it, Canope.

18 **Can.** At the heart?

20 **Sapho.** In the heart.

22 **Can.** Will you have any mithridate?

24 **Sapho.** Yea, if for this disease there were any
26 mithridate.

28 **Mileta.** Why? what disease is it, Madam, that physic
cannot cure?

30 **Sapho.** Only the disease, Mileta, that I have.

32 **Mileta.** Is it a burning ague?

34 **Sapho.** I think so, or a burning agony.

36 **Eug.** Will you have any of this syrup, to moisture
38 your mouth?

40 **Sapho.** Would I had some local things to dry my
brain.

Scene Setting: much of the rest of the play takes place in Sapho's bedroom (her *chamber*), where she will be found mostly languishing in bed. The bed and chamber are located at the back of the stage, whose curtain will be drawn open and closed repeatedly to indicate a shifting of the action in and out of the queen's boudoir.

Entering Characters: *Sapho* is still ill from her undiagnosed disease. She is visited by her company of ladies-in-waiting.

= phrase used to express lethargy or weariness.

4-5: Mileta assumes Sapho is suffering from a fever.
good you have = "would be better if you put on".

= relief.¹

19: Canope is asking if Sapho is suffering from a stomach-ache, the definition of *a pain at the heart*, according to the OED.

21: Sapho means she is enduring emotional heartache.⁶

= any preparation used as an antidote against poison.

= medicine.

31: Sapho is, and will continue to be, tight-lipped regarding the cause of her condition.

= fever, especially malaria.¹

= note the wordplay or *ague* and *agony*.

40: *some local things* = remedies which treat only a single part of the body.^{1,3} She is also probably cryptically referring

42		to Phao as a "local thing". ³
	Fav. Madam, will you see if you can sleep?	40-41: <i>to dry my brain</i> = contemporary literature suggests that a medically <i>dry brain</i> was less susceptible to "venery", or the pursuit of sexual pleasure. ¹ Bond suggests Sapho means she wishes to "put a halt to her flow of imagination" (p. 561). ³
44		
	Sapho. Sleep, Favilla? I shall then dream.	
46		
	Lamia. <u>As good</u> dream sleeping, as sigh waking.	= ie. it is as good to.
48		
	Eug. Phao is cunning in all kind of <u>simples</u> , and it is hard, if there be none, to procure sleep.	= curatives comprised of one or more herbs. ¹
50		
52	Sapho. Who?	
54	Eug. Phao.	
56	Sapho. Yea, Phao! Phao! – Ah Phao, let him come <u>presently</u> !	= immediately.
58		
	Mileta. Shall we draw the curtains whilest you give yourself to slumber?	
60		
62	Sapho. Do, but depart not: I have such starts in my sleep, disquieted I know not how. – [<i>In a slumber.</i>]	
64	Phao! Phao!	
66	Ism. What say you, Madam?	
68	Sapho. Nothing, but if I sleep not now, you send for Phao. – Ah Gods!	
70		
	<i>[She falls asleep, and her attendants draw the curtains.]</i>	
72		
74	Mileta. There is a fish called garus, that healeth all sickness, so as whilest it is applied one name not garus.	75-76: <i>so as...garus</i> = so long as no one speaks the word <i>garus</i> during treatment. Bond notes that Pliny mentions a fish called <i>garus</i> in his <i>Natural History</i> , but the properties mentioned here were Lyly's invention.
76		
78	Eug. An evil medicine for us women: for if we should be forbidden to name garus, we should chat nothing but garus.	78-80: with good psychological insight, Eugenua slyly comments on the difficulty women, and perhaps all people, have in avoiding saying something they have been expressly forbidden to say.
80		
82	Can. Well said, Eugenua, you <u>know yourself</u> .	= allusion to the famous injunction, "know thyself", which was carved onto a wall of the temple of the Delphic oracle.
84	Eug. Yea, Canope, <u>and</u> that I am one of your sex.	= ie. "and you also know".
86	Ism. I have heard of an herb called <u>lunary</u> , that being bound to the pulses of the sick, causeth nothing but dreams of weddings and dances.	= ie. the fern moonwort. ¹
88		

90 **Fav.** I think, Ismena, that herb be at thy pulses now:
 for thou art ever talking of matches and merriments.

92

94 **Can.** It is an unlucky sign in the chamber of the sick
 to talk of marriages, for my mother said it foresheweth
 death.

96

98 **Mileta.** It is very evil too, Canope, to sit at the bed's
 feet, and foretelleth danger: therefore, remove your
 stool, and sit by me.

100

102 **Lamia.** Sure it is some cold she hath taken.

104 **Ism.** If one were burnt, I think we women would say,
 he died of a cold.

106 **Fav.** It may be some conceit.

108 **Mileta.** Then is there no fear, for yet did I never hear
 of a woman that died of a conceit.

110

112 **Eug.** I mistrust her not, for that the owl hath not
 shrieked at the window, or the night raven croaked,
 both being fatal.

114

116 **Fav.** You are all superstitious, for these be but fancies
 of doting age, who by chance observing it in some,
 have set it down as a religion for all.

118

120 **Mileta.** Favilla, thou art but a girl: I would not have
 a weasel cry, nor desire to see a glass, nor an old wife
 come into my chamber; for then, though I lingered in
 my disease, I should never escape it.

122

124 **Sapho.** Ah, who is there?

126 [The curtains again drawn back.]

128 What sudden affrights be these? Methought Phao came
 with simples to make me sleep. Did nobody name
 Phao before I began to slumber?

130

132 **Mileta.** Yes, we told you of him.

134 **Sapho.** Let him be here tomorrow.

136 **Mileta.** He shall; will you have a little broth to comfort
 you?

= is attached or pressed to.
 = marriages. = festivities.¹

= foreshadows.¹ The root word is *foreshow*; *shew* was
 frequently used for *show*.

98-99: *remove your stool* = ie. "move your seat away from
 the bed". There is a continuity problem here, as Canope is
 no longer sitting by the foot of the bed, since the ladies are
 now in front of the curtains, which were drawn at line 72
 above.

103-4: no matter what ails one, women always attribute ill-
 health to a cold.

= an imagined, or psychosomatic, problem.

111-3: Eugenia is not anxious over Sapho's health (*I mis-
 trust her not*), because she has yet to hear either of two
 sounds of nature that were commonly believed to presage
 death, to wit, the screeching of an *owl* and the harsh cawing
 of a *raven*.

115-7: *for these...for all* = Favilla supposes the superstitions
 mentioned by Eugenia arose from the experience of some
 senile old man or woman (*doting age*), who, having once
 seen someone die after hearing the call of an owl or raven,
 told others of this coincidence, which report was then spread
 to such an extent that it became a general belief.

119-122: Mileta mentions some things she would not want
 to have happen were she lying ill in bed, occurrences
 superstitiously connected to misfortune.

= ie. look into a mirror.

124: Sapho calls out from behind the curtain.

138	<i>Sapho.</i> I can <u>relish nothing</u> .	= savour no food.
140	<i>Mileta.</i> Yet a little you must take to sustain nature.	
142	<i>Sapho.</i> I cannot, Mileta, I will not. – Oh, which way	
144	shall I lie? what shall I do? <u>Heigh ho</u> . Oh, Mileta, help	= again, an expression of lethargy.
	to <u>rear</u> me up my <u>bed</u> , my head lies too low. You	145: <i>rear</i> = raise. <i>bed</i> = this is the wording of the B.L. quarto, but many editors replace <i>bed</i> with the alternate quartos' <i>head</i> .
146	pester me with too many clothes. Fie, you keep the	
148	chamber too hot – <u>avoid it</u> . It may be I shall steal a nap	= ie. "leave my chamber." ³
148	when all are gone.	
150	<i>Mileta.</i> We will.	
152	[<i>Exeunt all the Ladies.</i>]	154-192 (below): Sapho engages in a lengthy soliloquy.
154	<i>Sapho.</i> Ah, <u>impatient</u> disease of love, and goddess of	= restless. ¹
156	love <u>thrice unpitiful</u> . The eagle is never stricken with	155: <i>thrice</i> = an intensifier. <i>unpitiful</i> = unmerciful
	thunder, nor the olive with lightning; and may great	155-7: <i>The eagle...with love</i> = if the noblest bird and finest fruit are innately protected from natural harm, then how can Sapho – the epitome of a great queen – be susceptible to the wounds of love? Pliny mentions both the eagle and the sea-calf as animals that are never struck by lightning (2.56).
	ladies be plagued with love? Oh, Venus, have I not	157-165: <i>Oh, Venus...by fancy</i> = Sapho is disappointed that Venus, whom she has always revered, has let her down so badly.
158	<u>strawed</u> thine altars with sweet roses? kept thy swans	= strewn, a dialect form. ¹
160	in clear rivers? fed thy sparrows with ripe corn? and	158-161: <i>swans, sparrows, doves</i> and <i>tortoises</i> were all sacred to Venus. ¹²
	harboured thy doves in fair houses? Thy tortoise have	= bedroom, boudoir.
	I nourished under my fig tree, my <u>chamber</u> have I	
162	<u>ceiled</u> with thy <u>cockleshells</u> , and dipped thy <u>sponge</u>	162: <i>ceiled</i> = adorned the ceiling of. ¹ <i>cockleshells</i> = the <i>cockleshell</i> , or scallop shell, was one of Venus' attributes. <i>sponge</i> = Lyly associated the <i>sponge</i> with Venus, though there was no mythological authority for doing so; Lyly's notion seems to derive from a painting, to which he referred in <i>Euphues</i> , by the 4th century Greek artist Protogenes of "Venus with a sponge".
	into the freshest waters. Didst thou nurse me in my	= bandages wrapped around a newborn infant's limbs to prevent it from moving. ¹
164	<u>swaddling clouts</u> with wholesome herbs, that I might	= prime of life. ¹ = from love.
	perish in my <u>flowering years by fancy</u> ?	
166	I perceive, but too late I perceive, and yet not too	167: <i>at last</i> = ie. "I ultimately did perceive".
	late, because <u>at last</u> , that <u>strains are caught</u> as well by	167-8: <i>strains...too high</i> = metaphorically, harm can be sustained just as easily by consorting with those beneath one (referring to Sapho's having fallen in love with Phao) as by stretching to obtain things, or people, above one's reach.
168	stooping too low, as reaching too high; that eyes are	168-170: <i>that eyes...the sun</i> = analogously, one's eyesight

bleared as soon with vapours that come from the

170 earth, as with beams that proceed from the sun. Love

lodgeth sometimes in caves; and thou, Phoebus, that

172 in the pride of thy heat shinest all day in our horizon,

at night dippest thy head in the ocean. Resist it, Sapho,

174 whilst it is yet tender.

Of acorns comes oaks, of drops floods, of sparks

176 flames, of atomies elements. But alas, it fareth with me

as with wasps, who, feeding on serpents, make their

178 stings more venomous: for glutting myself on the face

of Phao, I have made my desire more desperate. Into

180 the nest of an alcyon, no bird can enter but the alcyon;

and into the heart of so great a lady, can any creep

182 but a great lord? There is an herb (not unlike unto

my love), which, the further it groweth from the

184 sea, the salter it is; and my desires, the more they

swarve from reason, the more seem they reasonable.

186 When Phao cometh, what then? wilt thou open thy

188 love? Yea. – No, Sapho: but staring in his face till

thine eyes dazzle, and thy spirits faint, die before his

face: then this shall be written on thy tomb, that though

is injured or diminished just as easily when one's eyes are stung by vapours emanating from the earth as when one stares directly at the sun.

bleared = literally dimmed by tears or other watery discharge.¹

169: **as soon** = just as quickly.

169-170: **vapours...earth** = there are numerous references in 16th and 17th century literature to the **vapours** which were believed to reside within the empty spaces inside the earth.

170-1: **Love...caves** = a possible allusion to the famous affair between the Trojan prince **Aeneas** and the queen of Carthage **Dido**, who consummated their love in a **cave** during a terrible storm.

= ie. Apollo, in his guise as the sun-god, or the sun itself.

172: **heat** = the B.L. quarto prints an ambiguous **heate** here; early editors emended the word to **heart**, which is what was printed in the alternate quartos.

horizon = basically, "sky".¹

= ie. love.

= immature, so as to be more easily suppressed or overcome.¹

= from.

176: **atomies** = alternate form of **atoms**, Sapho alludes to a conceptual idea from Greek philosophy, referring to the imagined particles of which all matter was formed.

elements = it was thought that all matter in the universe was ultimately comprised of any of the four elements, viz. air, earth, fire and water.

177-8: **wasps...venomous** = an observation lifted directly from Pliny (11.116).³

179-180: **Into...the halcyon** = allusion to Pliny's observation that the mouth of the kingfisher's nest is very narrow (10.47).

alcyon = halcyon, a common alternate form for the bird more familiarly known as the kingfisher.¹

181-2: **into the heart...lord** = Sapho again rebukes herself for falling for such a low-ranking subject.

182-4: **There is...it is** = another conceit invented by Lyly.

= ie. saltier, an occasionally used alternate form.

185: **swarve from reason** = become immoderate;¹ **swarve** was the more common form of **swerve** until the 1620's. **reasonable** = rational.

= reveal (to him).

190	thy love were greater than wisdom could endure, yet thine honour was such as love could not violate. –	
192	Mileta!	
194		[<i>Re-enter Mileta and Ismena.</i>]
196	Mileta. I come.	
198	Sapho. <u>It will not be</u> : I can take no rest, which way soever I turn.	= "it is all futile", ¹ ie. Sapho can find no peace.
200		
202	Mileta. A strange malady!	
204	Sapho. Mileta, <u>if thou wilt, a martyrdom</u> . But give me my lute, and I will see if in song I can <u>beguile</u> mine own eyes.	= "it is rather a great agony (<i>martyrdom</i>)." ¹ = deceive (into sleep).
206		
208	Mileta. Here, Madam.	
210	Sapho. Have you sent for Phao?	
212	Mileta. Yea.	
214	Sapho. And to bring simples that will procure sleep?	
216	Mileta. No.	
218	Sapho. Foolish wench, what should the boy do here, if he bring not remedies with him? you think <u>belike</u> I could sleep if I did but see him. Let him not come at all – yes, let him come – no, it is no matter: yet will I try, let him come: do you hear?	= ie. "it likely or probable that".
220		
222	Mileta. Yea, Madam, it shall be done.	
224		
226		[<i>Mileta comes forward from the recess.</i>]
228	Peace, no noise: she beginneth to fall asleep. I will go to Phao.	225: Mileta "leaves" Sapho's boudoir at the rear of the stage.
230	Ism. Go speedily: for if she wake, and find you not here, she will be angry. Sick folks are testy, who though they eat nothing, yet they <u>feed on gall</u> .	= literally "eat gall", a metaphor for being ill-tempered; <i>gall</i> is bile, the secretion of the liver; but figuratively used, as here, to describe, when consumed, a feeling of bitterness or rancour. ¹
232		
234		[<i>Exit Mileta, while Ismena retires.</i>]
236	[<i>Song.</i>]	= steps back, so as to be out of the figurative spotlight. Bond notes that Ismena would not hear Sapho's song, in which Sapho reveals her secret yearning for Phao. 238-253 (below): Sapho's song: Sapho rails at Cupid, cursing him and wishing him endless woes. Note how the song is written in rhyming couplets, as well as mostly in iambic tetrameter, ie. lines comprised of four iambs, or pairs of syllables in which the first is unstressed, the second stressed.

238 **Sapho.** *Oh cruël Love! on thee I lay*
My curse, which shall strike blind the day:
240 *Never may sleep with velvet hand*
Charm thine eyes with sacred wand;
242 *Thy jailers shall be hopes and fears;*
Thy prison-mates, groans, sighs, and tears;
244 *Thy play, to wear out weary times,*

Fantastic passions, vows, and rhymes;
246 *Thy bread be frowns, thy drink be gall,*
Such as when you Phao call.

248 *The bed thou liest on be despair;*
Thy sleep, fond dreams; thy dreams, long care;

250 *Hope (like thy fool) at thy bed's head,*
Mock thee, till madness strike thee dead,
252 *As Phaö, thou dost me with thy proud eyes;*
In thee poor Sapho lives; for thee she dies.

254 [The curtains close.]

ACT III, SCENE IV.

Ante-room to Sapho's Chamber.

Enter Mileta and Phao.

1 **Mileta.** I would either your cunning, Phao, or your
2 fortune might by simples provoke my lady to some
slumber.

4 **Phao.** My simples are in operation as my simplicity
6 is, which if they do little good, assuredly they can do
no harm.

8 **Mileta.** Were I sick, the very sight of thy fair face
10 would drive me into a sound sleep.

12 **Phao.** Indeed, gentlewomen are so drowsy in their
14 desires, that they can scarce hold up their eyes for
love.

16 **Mileta.** I mean the delight of beauty would so blind
18 my senses, as I should be quickly rocked into a deep
rest.

20 **Phao.** You women have an excuse for an advantage,

Sapho plays her lute (which she asked for at lines 203-4 above) as she sings.

= ie. Cupid.
= cause Cupid to endure perpetual night, ie. by blinding him.
240-1: ie. "may you never sleep again."

= ie. "thy prison-mates shall be".
244: "your playtime, by which you will pass slow-moving time, shall be comprised of".

246-7: Sapho wishes Cupid to suffer the same bitterness as she herself experiences when she calls for Phao in vain.

249: "may your sleep be filled with mad (**fond**) dreams, and may your dreams cause you endless anxiety."
= ie. "may hope". = ie. "like your jester".

252: **me** = ie. "strike me dead".
252-3: the song ends with a pair of lines in iambic pentameter; **Phao** in line 252 is likely intended to be a disyllable.

Stage direction: Sapho and Ismena are behind the closing curtain.

Entering Characters: **Mileta** enters the stage with **Phao**, who has responded to Sapho's summons.

= wish, hope, expect.
= remedies made from herbs.

5: **in** = ie. "in their".
as = like.
simplicity = foolishness or ignorance; Phao is modest.

9-10: while intending to be flattering to the attractive Phao, Mileta's compliment is an odd one at best.

= **blind** is the B.L. quarto's reading; the alternate quartos print **bind** instead.

20-22: Phao understands that women, being women, must

22 which must be allowed, because only to you women it was allotted.

24 **Mileta.** Phao, thou art passing fair, and able to draw a chaste eye, not only to glance, but to gaze on thee.

26 Thy young years, thy quick wit, thy stayed desires are of force to control those which should command.

28 **Phao.** Lady, I forgot to commend you first, and lest I should have overslipped to praise you at all, you have brought in my beauty, which is simple, that in courtesy I might remember yours, which is singular.

34 **Mileta.** You mistake of purpose, or misconster of malice.

36 **Phao.** I am as far from malice as you from love, and to mistake of purpose were to mislike of peevisness.

40 **Mileta.** As far as I from love? Why, think you me so dull I cannot love, or so spiteful I will not?

42 **Phao.** Neither, lady: but how should men imagine women can love, when in their mouths there is nothing rifer, than “In faith, I do not love.”

46 **Mileta.** Why, will you have women's love in their tongues?

48 **Phao.** Yea, else do I think there is none in their hearts.

52 **Mileta.** Why?

54 **Phao.** Because there was never anything in the bottom of a woman's heart that cometh not to her tongue's end.

56 **Mileta.** You are too young to cheapen love.

58 **Mileta.** You are too young to cheapen love.

be permitted to "presume upon their sex" (Bond, p. 561),³ and as such prevail in an argument.⁶

24-25: Phao's beauty is such that it can tempt even the chastest of women.
passing = exceedingly.
draw = attract.

= suppressed sensual appetite;¹ but the quartos print *staied* here, which could also be interpreted to be the word *staid*, meaning "steady" or "unchanging".^{1,6}

27: "powerful enough to cause those (ie. women) who are in high positions (and thus in position to *command* you) to submit to you." Mileta is talking about herself here, but her observation could be seen as unintentionally applying to Sapho as well.⁶

29-32: the polite Phao realizes that he should have praised (*commended*) Mileta's beauty before she did his.

30: *overslipped* = omitted.¹
 30-32: *you have...singular* = Phao suggests that Mileta has deliberately introduced his beauty (which he calls *simple*, ie. plain or unexceptionable) into the conversation specifically to induce Phao to compliment her own rare (*singular*) good looks. Mileta is offended by Phao's suggestion.

34: *mistake of purpose* = "deliberately misinterpret what I said", or "mistake my reason for saying what I did".
misconster of = "misconstrue me out of".
 = "(be as bad as to) dislike (you) out of perversity, obstinacy, foolishness or caprice."^{1,2,3}
 = sullen or lifeless.¹

44-45: *when in...not love* = an observation on the dissembling nature of women, who always claim to be disinterested in a man.
rifer = more common, ie. more commonly spoken.
In faith = truly.

47-48: ie. should women actually open their hearts to a man?

54: Phao's logic is as follows: because a woman can never resist speaking what is in her heart, then, if she will not tell a man she loves him, it would be understandable if he thought she was rejecting him.
 = trivialize.¹

60	Phao. Yet old enough to talk with market folks.	60: Phao, punning, takes <i>cheapen</i> in its original and still common 16th century commercial meaning, to "haggle" or "bid for". ¹
62	Mileta. Well, let us <u>in</u> .	= ie. go in.
64	[<i>The curtains are drawn back.</i>]	64: Sapho and Ismena are revealed at the back of the stage.
66	Ism. Phao is come.	
68	Sapho. Who? Phao? Phao, let him come near: but who sent for him?	
70	Mileta. You, madam.	
72	Sapho. I am loath to take any medicines: yet must I, rather than <u>pine in these maladies</u> . – Phao, you may make me sleep, if you will.	= waste away from, or be tormented by, this ailment. ^{1,2}
76	Phao. If I can, I must, if you <u>will</u> .	= desire it.
78	Sapho. What herbs have you brought, Phao?	
80	Phao. Such as will make you sleep, madam, though they cannot make me slumber.	
82	Sapho. Why, how can you cure me, when you cannot remedy yourself?	
84	Phao. Yes, madam, <u>the causes are contrary</u> : for it is	= ie. "our cases are different."
86	only a <u>dryness in your brains</u> that keepeth you from rest; but –	88-89: <i>a dryness...rest</i> = a <i>dry brain</i> keeps one from sleeping, because, suggests Professor Thomas Roche in his notes to Edmund Spenser's epic poem of 1590, <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , it has not been "moistened with the dew of sleep" (p. 1078, notes to Book I, Canto I). ¹⁷ This interpretation seems to be antithetical to that of <i>dryness of the brain</i> as it was used Act III.iii.40-41 above.
88		
90		
92	Sapho. But what?	
94	Phao. Nothing, but <u>mine is not so</u> .	= ie. Phao's brain is not dry (thus he can sleep).
96	Sapho. Nay, then I despair of help if our disease be not <u>all one</u> .	= the same.
98	Phao. I <u>would</u> our diseases were all one.	= wish.
100	Sapho. It goes hard with the patient, when the physician <u>is desperate</u> .	= ie. is unable to effect a cure. ⁶
102	Phao. Yet Medea made the ever-waking dragon to	
104	<u>snort</u> , when she, poor soul, <u>could not wink</u> .	103-4: yet even Medea could put the dragon to sleep when she herself was unable to sleep a wink. Phao alludes to a well-known episode from the story of Jason and the Argonauts : Jason had sailed to Colchis on the Black Sea to find the golden fleece. King Aeetes promised to give the fleece to his visitor, if he (Jason) could perform three impossibly difficult tasks; the first two

106 **Sapho.** Medea was in love, and nothing could cause
her rest but Jason.

108
110 **Phao.** Indeed, I know no herb to make lovers sleep,
but heartsease, which, because it groweth so high, I
cannot reach: for –

112

114 **Sapho.** For whom?

116 **Phao.** For such as love.

118 **Sapho.** It groweth very low, and I can never stoop to
it, that –

120 **Phao.** That what?

122 **Sapho.** That I may gather it: but why do you sigh so,
Phao?

124 **Phao.** It is mine use, madam.

126 **Sapho.** It will do you harm, and me too: for I never
128 hear one sigh, but I must sigh't also.

130 **Phao.** It were best, then, that your ladyship give me
leave to be gone, for I can but sigh.

132 **Sapho.** Nay, stay: for now I begin to sigh, I shall not
134 leave, though you be gone. But what do you think best
for your sighing to take it away?

136 **Phao.** Yew, Madam.

138 **Sapho.** Me?

140 **Phao.** No, madam, yew of the tree.

142 **Sapho.** Then will I love yew the better. And, indeed, I
144 think it would make me sleep too; therefore, all other

completed, Jason's last job was to take the fleece from the
ever-watchful **dragon** which guarded it. The princess – and
witch – **Medea**, who had fallen in love with Jason, and had
been helping Jason with his tasks, gave Jason a potion with
which he was able to put the dragon to sleep, allowing Jason
to capture the golden fleece.

snort = snore, ie. enter a deep sleep.¹

could not wink = Medea could not sleep (**wink**)¹ because
of the restlessness caused by her love for Jason.

110, 117: the name **heartsease** was given to two distinct
flowers:

(1) the wallflower (line 110), which grows on walls,
rocks and quarries (and hence **groweth so high**), and
(2) the pansy (**It** of line 117, which **groweth very low**).

There is also of course an implied pun on the unbotan-
ical meaning of **heartsease**, "contentment", or "peace of
mind".^{1,6}

In line 110, **heartsease** as wallflower represents Sapho,
who, as a queen, is too high in status for Phao to properly
pursue.

117-8: **It** is heartsease as pansy, which represents Phao,
who is too far below Sapho in rank for her to deign to
take as a lover.

= "my custom".

= Sapho alludes to the common superstition that each sigh
costs the heart the loss of a drop of blood.⁶
= "sigh it", ie. sigh.

= permission to leave. = only.

134: **leave** = Sapho puns, using **leave** to mean "cease".

134-5: **But what...away** = ie. what does Phao do to
treat his need to sigh?

= the well-known coniferous tree: Sapho makes the obvious
error.

143-8: Phao and Sapho are flirting: while ostensibly
discussing the yew tree, they clearly intend for **yew**

146	simples set aside, I will simply use only yew.	to be understood as <i>you</i> .
148	Phao. Do, madam, for I think nothing in the world so good as yew.	
150	Sapho. Farewell for this time.	
152	<i>[He comes from the recess, the curtains closing behind him.]</i>	152-3: Phao comes forward, while Sapho, in her bed, remains behind the curtain.
154	<i>Enter Venus and Cupid.</i>	
156	Venus. Is not your name Phao?	
158	Phao. Phao, fair Venus, whom you made so fair.	
160	Venus. So <u>passing</u> fair! Oh, fair Phao, oh, sweet Phao: what wilt thou do for Venus?	161: Venus now falls in love with Phao! <i>passing</i> = exceedingly.
162		
164	Phao. Anything that cometh <u>in the compass</u> of my poor fortune.	= within the limit.
166		
168	Venus. Cupid shall teach thee to shoot, and I will instruct thee to <u>dissemble</u> .	= speak, and thus behave, disingenuously.
170	Phao. I will learn anything but dissembling.	
172	Venus. Why, my boy?	
174	Phao. Because then I must learn to be a woman.	174: the common trope of women being dissemblers.
176	Venus. Thou heardest that <u>of</u> a man.	= ie. from.
178	Phao. Men speak truth.	
180	Venus. But <u>truth</u> is a she, and so always <u>painted</u> .	180: Venus refers to personified <i>Truth</i> , who was always portrayed (<i>painted</i>) as a goddess.
182	Phao. I think a <u>painted</u> truth.	= pretended.
184	Venus. Well, farewell for this time: for I must visit Sapho.	
186	<i>[Phao exit.]</i>	187: Venus and Cupid remain on stage.
	END OF ACT III.	

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Sapho's Chamber: the curtains are drawn back.

Still on Stage: Venus and Cupid.

1	Venus. Sapho, I have heard <u>thy complaints</u> , and pitied	= see Act III.iii.154f.
2	thine agonies.	
4	Sapho. Oh, Venus, my <u>cares</u> are only known to thee,	= griefs. ¹
6	and <u>by</u> thee only came the cause. – Cupid, why didst	= from, ie. because of.
8	thou wound me so deep?	
8	Cupid. My mother <u>bad</u> me draw mine arrow to the	= commanded; bad is the past tense form of the verb to bid .
10	head.	
10	Sapho. Venus, why didst thou prove so hateful?	
12	Venus. Cupid took a wrong <u>shaft</u> .	13: Venus interestingly blames Cupid for Sapho's problems. shaft = arrow.
14	Sapho. Oh, Cupid, too unkind, to make me so <u>kind</u> ,	= foolishly in love. ¹
16	that almost I transgress the modesty of my <u>kind</u> .	16: Sapho's heartache has nearly driven her to shameless behaviour inappropriate for one of her gender (kind in line 16). ⁶ Note the triple-pun on kind .
18	Cupid. I was blind, and could not see mine arrow.	18: Cupid admits his error, but claims it was an accident. He has taken advantage of the traditional human depiction of him as either blindfolded or literally blind, as a way to meta- phorically describe the arbitrariness with which love strikes a person.
20	Sapho. How came it to pass, thou didst hit my heart?	
22	Cupid. That came by the nature of the head, which	
24	being once let out of the bow, can find none other	
24	<u>lighting</u> place but the heart.	= landing.
26	Venus. Be not dismayed, Phao shall <u>yield</u> .	= ie. "give himself to you."
28	Sapho. If he yield, then shall I shame to embrace one	28-30: Sapho describes her conundrum. Note her triple-pun with mean in these lines.
	so <u>mean</u> ; <u>if not, die</u> , because I cannot embrace one so	29: mean = low-ranked socially. if not, die = ie. "if he does not yield, than I shall die". 29-30: cannot...so mean = ie. will be unable to embrace the cruel (mean) Phao (whom she really wants to embrace).
30	mean. Thus do I find no <u>mean</u> .	= middle-ground (for relief).
32	Venus. Well, I will work <u>for thee</u> . Farewell.	= for Sapho's benefit, ie. Venus will help the queen. The goddess' intention will be to break the mutual attraction between Phao and Sapho, and take Phao for herself!
34	Sapho. Farewell, sweet Venus, and thou, Cupid, which art sweetest in thy <u>sharpness</u> .	= shrewdness, with obvious pun on the sharpness of his

[Exit Sapho.]

ACT IV, SCENE II.*The same: Sapho's Chamber.**Still on Stage: Venus, Cupid.*

1 **Venus.** Cupid, what hast thou done? put thine arrows
2 in Phao's eyes, and wounded thy mother's heart?

4 **Cupid.** You gave him a face to allure, then why
should not I give him eyes to pierce?

6 **Venus.** Oh Venus! unhappy Venus! who in bestowing
8 a benefit upon a man, hast brought a bane unto a

goddess. What perplexities dost thou feel? Oh, fair
10 Phao! And therefore made fair to breed in me a frenzy!

Oh, would that when I gave thee golden locks to curl
12 thy head, I had shackled thee with iron locks on thy

feet! And when I nursed thee, Sapho, with lettuce,

14 would it had turned to hemlock! Have I brought a
smooth skin over thy face, to make a rough scar in my

16 heart? And given thee a fresh colour like the damask
rose, to make mine pale like the stained turquie? Oh

18 Cupid, thy flames with Psyche's were but sparks, and
my desires with Adonis but dreams, in respect of these
20 unacquainted torments.

arrows.

1-2: the conceit here is that a glance from Phao's eyes has acted like one of Cupid's arrows, causing Venus to fall in love with him when he looked at her. Venus absurdly blames her son for this, but though he plays along, she does not pursue this idea.

7-9: **who in...goddess** = ie. who by giving the gift of beauty to Phao, has brought ruin (*a bane*) on herself.

= bewilderment.¹

= delirium.

11-12: **golden...head** = ie. the gift of unsurpassed beauty. Note the pun on **locks**, with its meaning of "hair" in line 11 and "fetters" in line 12.

= the odd reference to **lettuce** here is probably explained by its appearance in the enigmatic first line of the very brief chapter on Phao in the *Various Histories* (one of Lyly's sources for this play), written by the Roman Aelian (c.175 - c.235 A.D.): "*Phaon, being the most beautiful of all men, was by Venus hid among lettices.*"¹⁴ We may note that **lettuce** is mentioned in some 17th century works as a curative for an infant's inflammations and fever, when it is consumed by the baby's nurse.

14: **hemlock** = well-known poisonous plant.

14-15: **brought...face** = ie. "made thee beautiful".

16-17: **damask rose** = well-known pink rose.

= allusion to the belief that the colour of turquoise (*turquie*) would turn lighter as a warning of impending danger for the jewel's wearer.⁵

18-20: Cupid's and Venus' love for Psyche and Adonis respectively were nothing compared to the intensity of Venus' passion for Phao.

in respect of = compared to.

unacquainted = unfamiliar.¹

The affair between **Cupid** and the princess **Psyche**, who were deeply in love, makes for one of the more pleasing tales of ancient myth. The god – a beautiful young man in this tale – secreted the mortal Psyche away to some unknown location, where he visited her every night, but only in the dark, so as to keep his identity secret; the god warned

	<p>Psyche that the arrangement could continue only so long as she never discovered who her lover was. Urged on by her sisters, Psyche deliberately discovered Cupid's identity, driving him to abandon her. Mourning her loss, Psyche wandered aimlessly seeking Cupid, only to stumble into the palace of Venus, who, jealous of Psyche's attentions to Cupid, enslaved her. Cupid helped Psyche overcome Venus' hatred, and she (Psyche) was made immortal. The story ends with Psyche and Cupid marrying. Psyche has been understood to be the embodiment of the human soul.⁸</p> <p><i>Adonis</i> was a beautiful young man beloved by <i>Venus</i>. Venus warned Adonis against his favourite sport, hunting, but he ignored her admonition, only to be killed by a wild boar. Venus, distraught, dripped nectar onto his flowing blood, from which sprung beautiful purple flowers, said to be the first anemones or hyacinths.</p> <p>21-31 (below): the dashes in the paragraph indicate where Venus' mood swings violently between distraught self-pity and proud exaltation.</p>
<p>Laugh, Juno! Venus is in love; but Juno shall not</p>	<p>21-22: <i>Laugh...be in love</i> = Venus arrogantly mocks Juno, the queen of the gods. This is the first of several references in the play to the rivalry between Juno and Venus, which is described in a number of ancient sources.⁶</p> <p><i>lest she be in love</i> (line 22) = in case Juno too finds herself attracted to Phao.</p>
<p>22 see with whom, lest she be in love. – Venus <u>belike</u> is</p> <p>become <u>stale</u>. Sapho, <u>forsooth</u>, because she hath many</p> <p>24 virtues, therefore she must have <u>all the favours</u>. Venus <u>waxeth</u> old; and <u>then</u> she was a pretty <u>wench</u>, when</p>	<p>22-27: <i>Venus...foot</i> = Venus wonders if she has lost her touch, due to her age.</p> <p><i>belike</i> = likely.</p> <p>= worn-out, faded, ie. past her prime.² = certainly.¹</p> <p>= the regard of all the men.¹</p> <p>= grows. = ie. once. = lass.</p>
<p>26 Juno was a young wife; now <u>crow's foot</u> is on <u>her</u></p>	<p>26: <i>crow's foot</i> = still current term used to describe the wrinkles that appear later in life near the corners of one's eyes.</p> <p><i>her</i> = ie. Venus'.</p>
<p>eye, and <u>the black ox</u> hath trod on her foot. – But were</p>	<p>27: <i>the black...foot</i> = ie. Venus has aged. The <i>black ox</i> was a symbol of age and adversity:¹ this exact expression goes back at least to 1546: "<i>the blacke oxe had not trode on his nor her foote.</i>"</p> <p><i>troad</i> = trod, a common alternate form,</p> <p>27-28: <i>But were...virtuous</i> = ie. "but no matter how virtuous Sapho is".</p>
<p>28 Sapho never so virtuous, doth she think to contend with Venus to be as amorous? Yield, Phao; but yield</p>	<p>28-29: <i>doth she...amorous</i> = ie. does Sapho think she can compete with Sapho in the game of love?</p>
<p>30 to me, Phao: I entreat where I may command; command thou, where thou shouldest entreat.</p>	<p>30-31: <i>I entreat...entreat</i> = Venus finds herself begging, when, as a goddess, she should be ordering Phao to submit himself to her.</p>
<p>32 In this case, Cupid, what is thy counsel? Venus must both play the lover and the dissembler, and therefore</p> <p>34 the dissembler, because the lover.</p>	<p>32-34: <i>Venus...lover</i> = Venus has previously noted that deceit and disingenuousness are an inextricable part of the act of courtship.</p>

36 **Cupid.** You will ever be playing with arrows, like children with knives: and then, when you bleed, you

38 cry: go to Vulcan, entreat by prayers, threaten with
40 blows, woo with kisses, ban with curses, try all means to rid these extremities.

42 **Venus.** To what end?

44 **Cupid.** That he might make me new arrows, for

46 nothing can root out the desires of Phao, but a new
48 shaft of inconstancy; nor anything turn Sapho's heart, but a new arrow of disdain. And then, they disliking one the other, who shall enjoy Phao but Venus?

50 **Venus.** I will follow thy counsel. For Venus, though she be in her latter age for years, yet is she in her
52 nonage for affections. When Venus ceaseth to love, let Jove cease to rule. But come, let us to Vulcan.

54

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

Sapho's Chamber: the curtains again drawn back.

Sapho, Mileta, Ismena, Eugenia, Lamyia, Favilla, and Canope.

1 **Sapho.** What dreams are these, Mileta? And can there
2 be no truth in dreams? Yea, dreams have their truth. Methought I saw a stockdove or woodquilt, I know

4 not how to term it, that brought short straws to build his nest in a tall cedar, where, whiles with his bill he

6 was framing his building, he lost as many feathers from his wings as he laid straws in his nest; yet
8 scambling to catch hold to harbour in the house he had

10 made, he suddenly fell from the bough where he stood. And then, pitifully casting up his eyes, he cried in such terms (as I imagined) as might either condemn the

36-38: **You will...cry** = Venus should not be surprised to be getting hurt herself when she meddles with Cupid and his powerful – and very dangerous – arrows. Cupid seems to be metaphorically chiding Venus for involving herself too much in the affairs of human hearts, and should thus not be surprised to find herself incurring self-inflicted wounds.

38-40: **go to...extremities** = Venus should use all of a woman's manipulative tricks to obtain a favour from her husband Vulcan.

ban = "damn him".

rid these extremities = rectify this adverse situation.¹

44-48: interestingly, Cupid can only reverse or supersede the effects of a previous arrow by shooting his victim with a new one.

45-47: **nothing...disdain** = the only way to turn Phao's affections away from Sapho is to strike him with an arrow that will cause him to be faithless to her; similarly, Sapho's yearning for Phao can only be ended by shooting her with an arrow which will cause her to scorn him.

inconstancy (line 46) = fickleness.

= "youth when it comes to love."¹

= ie. go to.

Entering Characters: Sapho, still languishing in bed, is surrounded by her attendants. What follows is an entertaining, if pointless, debate about the meanings of the ladies' dreams.

= wild pigeon.¹ = ringdove or wood pigeon.¹

4: **how to term it** = ie. what to call the bird in her dream.

4-5: **that brought...nest** = Bevington notes that long straws make for more stable and secure nests than do short straws.

= shaping or building his nest.

8: **scambling** = struggling; predecessor to "scrambling".¹
harbour in the house = shelter in the nest.

10-12: **he cried...a mind** = the bird's complaint about its predicament could be interpreted as either blaming the tree,

12 nature of such a tree, or the daring of such a mind.
 14 Whilest he lay quaking upon the ground, and I gazing
 on the cedar, I might perceive ants to breed in the rind,
coveting only to hoard, and caterpillars to cleave to the
 16 leaves, labouring only to suck, which caused mo
 18 leaves to fall from the tree, than there did feathers
 before from the dove. Methought, Mileta, I sighed in
 20 my sleep, pitying both the fortune of the bird, and the
 misfortune of the tree; but in this time, quills began to
 22 bud again in the bird, which made him look as though
 he would fly up, and then wished I that the body of the
 tree would bow, that he might but creep up the tree;
 24 then – and so – hey ho.

26 **Mileta.** And so what?
 28 **Sapho.** Nothing Mileta: but, and so I waked. But did
 nobody dream but I?
 30 **Mileta.** I dreamed last night – but I hope dreams are
 32 contrary – that holding my head over a sweet smoke,
 all my hair blazed on a bright flame. Methought Ismena
 34 cast water to quench it: yet the sparks fell on my
 bosom, and, wiping them away with my hand, I was
 36 all in gore blood, till one with a few fresh flowers
 38 staunched it. And so stretching myself as stiff, I
started: it was but a dream.

or blaming itself, for being so ambitious as to attempt to
 build a nest in a tree as tall as the cedar.

= ie. saw. = bark.¹

15: **coveting...hoard** = desiring only to amass provisions;
 note, however, that this is a description of ants as corrupt
 (see the note at after line 24 below); the more familiar and
 admirable image of ants as storers of food for the winter can
 be traced back to Aesop's famous story of the ant and the
 grasshopper.

cleave = attach themselves.

16: **suck** = draw liquid or nutrients from the leaves, hence
 killing the tree.

mo = ie. more, a common alternate form.

= (bad) luck.

= hollow shafts of feathers, hence "new feathers".¹

= ie. bow down. = climb.

= again, Sapho is struck by a wave of ennui.

1-24 (above): Sapho's Dream: according to Bond, the
 queen's dream was allegorical:

The **cedar tree** represented Queen Elizabeth;

The **ants**, human parasites who got rich at the govern-
 ment's expense;

The **caterpillars**, England's Catholic clergy who were
 thought to always be plotting against the queen; and

The **stockdove**, Robert Dudley, the 1st Earl of Leicester,
 who was a suitor for the queen's hand for many years;
 Leicester fell into disgrace in 1579-1580, only to return to
 favour afterwards (see Bond, p. 562).³

On the other hand, Daniel sees Sapho's dream as "simply
 an allegory for yearning" (page 365).⁴

= note that Lyly imputed basically this same line to Queen
 Elizabeth at the conclusion of the Prologue at Court, ie.
 "And so you awaked."⁶

= ie. they predict the opposite of what will happen.

36: **all in gore blood** = covered in gory or clotted blood;¹
gore blood was a surprisingly common collocation of
 the 16th and 17 centuries.

one = ie. someone.

= ie. stopped the flow of the blood.¹

= ie. was startled, and hence woke up.

40 **Ism.** It is a sign you shall fall in love with hearing fair
 42 words. Water signifieth counsel, flowers death. And
 44 **Mileta.** You are no interpreter, but an inter-prater,
 46 harping always upon love, till you be as blind as a
 48 **Ism.** I remember last night but one: I dreamed mine
 50 eyetooth was loose, and that I thrust it out with my
 52 **Mileta.** It foretellethe the loss of a friend: and I ever
 54 thought thee so full of prattle, that thou wouldest thrust
 56 **Ism.** Yea, Mileta, but it was loose before; and if my
 58 friend be loose, as good thrust out with plain words,
 60 as kept in with dissembling.
 62 **Eug.** Dreams are but dotings, which come either by
 things we see in the day, or meats that we eat, and so
 the common sense preferring it to be the imaginative.
 64 **Ism.** Soft, philosophatrix, well seen in the secrets of
 66 art, and not seduced with the superstitions of nature!

Sapho. Ismena's tongue never lieth still: I think all her
 68 teeth will be loose, they are so often jogged against her
 tongue. But say on, Eugenua.
 70 **Eug.** There is all.
 72 **Sapho.** What did you dream, Canope?
 74 **Can.** I seldom dream, Madam: but sithence your
 76 sickness, I cannot tell whether with overwatching,

40-41: **with hearing fair words** = ie. "with the man who
 speaks flattering to you."
 = "represents the giving of advice".
 = "dislodge your inclination towards amorousness".
 = the OED defines this unique word (invented by Lyly) to
 mean "one who prates (ie. chatters) at intervals"; this is the
 only citation for this entry in the OED, and is in fact the only
 appearance of this word in all of old English literature.
 45: **harping** = dwelling tiresomely.
 45-46: **blind as a harper** = proverbial conceit in
 English literature.
 = ie. two nights previous. = ie. my.
 = ie. canine tooth.¹
 = always.
 53: **thee...prattle** = ie. "that you were so full of idle talk".
 53-54: **thrust out** = ie. like a tooth: hence, "lose".
 = Bevington emends to **thy**. = gossiping.¹
 = lascivious, wanton. = "it is better to break up with the
 friend".
 = ie. than to keep up a false friendship.
 = foolishness. = ie. are brought on.
 = food.
 62: ie. "it is generally understood that dreams are nothing
 more than the product of imagination." Eugenua is dismissive
 of the other ladies' interpretive approach to dreaming.
preferring = promoting.³
 64-65: Ismena, in turn, lightly mocks Eugenua's "scientific"
 view of the insignificance of dreams.
Soft = "wait a moment".
philosophatrix = female philosopher; another word
 invented by Lyly. As with **inter-prater** above, this is the
 only appearance of this word in old English literature; in
 this case, however, the word is completely absent from the
 OED.
seen = skilled.
art = scholarship or science.²
seduced = misled.¹
 = ie. that.
 = since.
 = "if it is due to exhaustion from my keeping watch over
 you without sleep for so long".

78 but I have had many fantastical visions; for even
now, slumbering by your bed's side, methought I was
80 shadowed with a cloud, where labouring to unwrap
myself, I was more entangled. But in the midst of my
82 striving, it seemed to mizzle gold, with fair drops; I
filled my lap, and running to shew it my fellows, it
84 turned to dust. I blushed, they laughed; and then I
waked, being glad it was but a dream.

86 *Ism.* Take heed, Canope, that gold tempt not your lap,
and then you blush for shame.

88

90 *Can.* It is good luck to dream of gold.

92 *Ism.* Yea, if it had continued gold.

94 *Lamia.* I dream every night, and the last night this: me
thought that, walking in the sun, I was stung with the
fly tarantula, whose venom nothing can expel but the
96 sweet consent of music. I tried all kind of instruments,

98 but found no ease, till, at the last, two lutes tuned in
one key so glutted my thirsting ears, that my grief
presently ceased, for joy whereof as I was clapping my
100 hands, your ladyship called.

102 *Mileta.* It is a sign that nothing shall assuage your
love but marriage: for such is the tying of two in
wedlock, as is the tuning of two lutes in one key: for
104 striking the strings of the one, straws will stir upon the

106 strings of the other; and in two minds linked in love,
one cannot be delighted but the other rejoiceth.

108

110 *Fav.* Methought, going by the seaside among pebbles,
I saw one playing with a round stone, ever throwing it

= concealed within.¹

81: *it seemed...gold* = ie. the cloud seemed to drizzle gold.
= "show the gold to my companions".

86-87: Ismena warns Canope not to let herself be tempted to
give herself over to a man just because he showers her with
gifts or other forms of his wealth. There is a possible
allusion to the myth of the beautiful maiden *Danae*, who
was visited by Jupiter in the guise of a shower of gold,
impregnating her. References to the gold falling into the *lap*
of *Danae* were common in this era.

Take heed = beware.

lap = perhaps referring to the front portion of Canope's
skirt (OED def. 4b); *lap* was also sometimes used to refer to
the female genitalia (OED def. 3b).

91: ie. "yes, if I had found real gold in front of me when
I awoke."⁶

94-96: *I was stung...music* = Lyly was the first to refer to
the *tarantula* as a type of *fly*; a few tantalizing 17th century
works described a fit of joyful madness or uncontrolled
laughter that resulted from the bite of the tarantula. This
frenzy, called *tarantism* by 17th century writers, was thought
to have been possibly fatal, and only curable upon the
playing of music. The OED states that an epidemic of
frenzied dancing caused by tarantism actually took place in
Italy in the 15th-17th centuries.

with (line 94) = by.

consent = harmony.

= relief (from the effects of the bite).

= alleviate.

104-6: *for striking...other* = a mixed metaphor for descri-
bing the deep connection between two minds joined in love:

(1) the vibrations of one instrument's *strings* will cause
the strings of another to vibrate as well; and

(2) the rustle, or *stirring*, of a *straw* was often used as a
metaphor for the subtle effect of, e.g. a soft wind.

= ie. "just as".

110: *one* = someone.

into the water when the sun shined: I asked the name;

112 he said it was called "asbeston", which, being once
hot, would never be cold. He gave it me, and vanished.

114 I, forgetting myself, delighted with the fair show,

116 would always shew it by candlelight, pull it out in
the sun, and see how bright it would look in the fire,
118 where, catching heat, nothing could cool it. For anger,
I threw it against the wall, and, with the heaving up of
mine arm, I waked.

120 **Mileta.** Beware of love, Favilla; for women's hearts
122 are such stones, which, warmed by affection, cannot
be cooled by wisdom.

124 **Fav.** I warrant you, for I never credit men's words.

126 **Ism.** Yet be wary, for women are scorched sometimes
128 with men's eyes, though they had rather consume than
confess.

130 **Sapho.** Cease your talking; for I would fain sleep, to
132 see if I can dream whether the bird hath feathers or the
ants wings. Draw the curtain.

134

[*The curtains close.*]

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

Vulcan's Forge.

*Enter Venus and Cupid,
and, separately, Vulcan and Calypho.*

110-1: **ever...shined** = continuously immersing the stone into water to keep it from igniting.³

112-3: **it was called...cold** = the legendary stone known as **asbeston** was thought to be unquenchable once it caught fire.¹

hot = spelling in the 16th century remained casual, but the B.L. quarto's particularly unusual rendering of **hot** as **whotte** is worth mentioning.

= the spelling of individual words was wildly inconsistent even within 16th century publications: the B.L. quarto prints **show** here, but **shew** elsewhere, even in the next line!

= out of.

= passion.

= ie. "I assure you what you say is true".¹ = believe.

= metaphorically "burn up", hence "pine" or "waste away".¹
= ie. admit to being in love.

= desire to.

132-3: **see if...wings** = Sapho hopes to resume her dream!

Scene IV: we have here a creative stage producer's dream, perhaps the most fantastical scene setting in the entire Lyly canon: the workshop of the blacksmith god, Vulcan, located underneath the volcano Mt. Etna in Sicily. Vulcan was assisted in the smithy by a team of Cyclopes, the famous one-eyed giants.

Entering Characters: in order for Venus' love for Phao to be consummated, the mutual desire between Phao and Sapho will have to be quashed. To accomplish this, Cupid will have to strike the couple with new arrows, which he at present does not possess.

Venus has thus come to Vulcan to ask him to manufacture for Cupid a new set of arrows. The crippled Vulcan is naturally suspicious of anything Venus does, since she regularly cheats on him. Venus' request will require from her a generous dose of persuasive sweet-talk to get what she wants from her husband.

1 **Venus.** Come, Cupid, Vulcan's flames must quench
 2 Venus' fires. – Vulcan?

4 [Vulcan looks out of the Forge.]

6 **Vulcan.** Who?

8 **Venus.** Venus.

10 **Vulcan.** Ho ho! Venus.

12 **Venus.** Come, sweet Vulcan. Thou knowest how
 14 sweet thou hast found Venus, who, being of all the
 goddesses the most fair, hath chosen thee, of all the
 16 gods the most foul. Thou must needs then confess I
 was most loving. Inquire not the cause of my suit by
 questions, but prevent the effects by courtesy. Make
 18 me six arrowheads. It is given thee of the gods by
 permission to frame them to any purpose. I shall
 20 request them by prayer. – Why lourest thou, Vulcan?
 Wilt thou have a kiss? Hold up thy head: Venus hath
 22 young thoughts and fresh affections. Roots have

strings, when boughs have no leaves. But hearken in
 24 thine ear, Vulcan: how sayest thou?

26 **Vulcan.** Vulcan is a god with you when you are
 disposed to flatter. A right woman, whose tongue is
 28 like a bee's sting, which pricketh deepest when it is
 fullest of honey. Because you have made mine eyes

30 drunk with fair looks, you will set mine ears on edge
 with sweet words. You were wont to say that the
 32 beating of hammers made your head ache, and the
 smoke of the forge your eyes water, and every coal
 34 was a block in your way. You weep rose water when
 you ask, and spit vinegar when you have obtained.

36 What would you now with new arrows? Belike Mars
 hath a tougher skin on his heart, or Cupid a weaker
 38 arm, or Venus a better courage. Well, Venus, there is

never a smile in your face but hath made a wrinkle in

40 my forehead. Ganymedes must fill your cup, and you

1-2: metaphorically, Vulcan must forge new arrows for
 Cupid to use in order for Venus' passion (her *fires*) to
 be fulfilled.

= ie. to be her spouse.
 = ugliest.
 = request.
 = "alleviate the (harm caused by my) problem as a favour."

18-19: ***It is given...purpose*** = Vulcan has the power to give
 the arrows any capabilities he wants them to have.

= frownest or scowlest.

22-23: ***Roots...leaves*** = a metaphor for what Venus de-
 scribes as the deep and abiding love she has for Vulcan,
 despite her frequent straying.
strings (line 23) = fine threads or filaments.¹

= listen.

= a genuine woman, ie. the real thing, meant cynically.

28-29: ***a bee's sting...honey*** = Lyly had previously (in
Euphues) used the same analogy to make the point that
 women are most dangerous when they flatter.^{3,6}

= ie. drunk, a common 16th century alternate form.
 = accustomed.

34-35: ***You weep...obtained*** = Venus begs most piteously
 when she wants something from Vulcan, but the moment
 he has given her what she wants, she returns to her normal
 mode of speaking to him with open loathing.

36: ***would you*** = "do you want".
 36-38: ***Belike...courage*** = Vulcan grimly brings up
 Venus' notorious affair with Mars; mocking Venus, he
 guesses that she needs more powerful arrows to regain the
 affections of Mars, who is perhaps no longer interested in
 her.

39-40: ***made a wrinkle...forehead*** = ie. brought Vulcan
 anxiety.

40-41: ***Ganymedes...Jupiter*** = per Bond, Vulcan is pointing

will pledge none but Jupiter. But I will not chide

42 Venus. – Come, Cyclops, my wife must have her will:
 44 let us do that in earth which the gods cannot undo in
 heaven.

46 **Venus.** Gramercy, sweet Vulcan: to your work.

48 [*The Song, in making of the arrows.*]

50 **Vulcan.** My shag-hair Cyclops, come let's ply
Our Lemnian hammers lustily.

52 *By my wife's sparrows,*
 54 *I swear these arrows*
Shall singing fly
Through many a wanton's eye.

56 *These headed are with golden blisses,*

58 *These silver ones feathered with kisses,*
But this of lead

60 *Strikes a clown dead,*
When in a dance
He falls in a trance.

62 *To see his black-brow lass not buss him,*
And then whines out for Death t' untruss him.

64 *So, so, our work being done, let's play,*
Holiday, boys, cry holiday!

66

68 **Vulcan.** Here, Venus, I have finished these arrows by
art, bestow them you by wit; for as great advice must
 he use that hath them, as he cunning that made them.

70

out how Venus always prefers the best that life has to offer.
Ganymedes = cup-bearer of the gods.

= ie. to Calypho.

43-44: Vulcan refers to the ancient rule of the pantheon that no god can undo any spell cast by any other god.
that = ie. cause people to fall in love.⁶

= thank you.

= shaggy. = employ, work.

51: **Lemnian hammers** = allusion to the **hammers** of Vulcan and his fellow blacksmiths, and to the island of **Lemnos** onto which Vulcan fell when Jupiter tossed him off of Mt. Olympus, laming him. The islanders tended him during his recovery. See the note at Act 1.i.36.
lustily = vigorously.

52: **sparrows** were sacred to Venus.

= loose woman's.

56-58: Vulcan describes the features of some of the arrows he is making. Some have golden heads, some silver, and some lead.
line 56: "the heads of these arrow are infused with golden joys (**blisses**)".¹

58-63: traditionally, when Cupid struck someone with a **lead**-headed arrow, it caused the victim to fall to loathing, rather than loving, another.

= peasant or otherwise ignorant man.

62-63: the despondent lover wants only to die when his scowling (**black-brow**) girl refuses to kiss (**buss**) him, after she has been struck by the leaden arrow.
t' untruss him = ie. "to untruss him", a metaphor for "take his life", or some such: **to untruss** was to undress in part by undoing one's points (tagged laces used to attach one's hose to one's doublet).^{1,2}

68: **art** = skill.
bestow...by wit = "use them wisely."
 68-69: **for as...made them** = the possessor of these arrows must use them with judgment which is as good as is the skill of the man who made them.

Venus. Vulcan, now you have done with your forge,
 72 let us alone with the fancy. You are as the fletcher, not
 the archer; to meddle with the arrow, not the aim.

 74
Vulcan. I thought so: when I have done working, you
 76 have done wooing. Where is now “sweet Vulcan”?
 Well, I can say no more but this, which is enough and
 78 as much as any can say: Venus is a woman.

 80 **Venus.** Be not angry, Vulcan: I will love thee again,
 when I have either business or nothing else to do.
 82
Vulcan. My mother will make much of you, when
 84 there are no more men than Vulcan.

 86 [*Vulcan retires into the Forge.*]

END OF ACT IV.

71-73: with arrows in hand, Venus, unsurprisingly, reverts
 to her accustomed surly manner towards her husband!

 72: *let us...fancy* = ie. "keep your flights of imagination to
 yourself!"
 72-73: *You are...aim* = since Vulcan is only the
 manufacturer of the arrow (*the fletcher*),¹ his advice
 regarding how to fire them is unwelcome.
as = like.

 75-78: Vulcan is not surprised by his wife's about-face.

 = common Elizabethan poet's complaint about the fickleness
 of women.

 83-84: Juno (Vulcan's *mother*) will have the last laugh when
 he (Vulcan) is the last man on earth,⁶ and there are no other
 men alive for Venus to love: another reference to the conten-
 tious relationship between Juno and Venus.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same: Vulcan's Forge.

Still on Stage: Venus, Cupid.

1 **Venus.** Come, Cupid, receive with thy father's
2 instruments thy mother's instructions: for thou
4 must be wise in conceit, if thou wilt be fortunate
in execution.
6 This arrow is feathered with the wings of aegitus,
which never sleepeth for fear of his hen; the head
8 touched with the stone perillus, which causeth mistrust
and jealousy. Shoot this, Cupid, at men that have fair
10 wives, which will make them rub the brows when they
swell in the brains.
12 This shaft is headed with Lydian steel, which
striketh a deep disdain of that which we most desire;
the feathers are of turtle, but dipped in the blood of a

Scene Setting: Venus and Cupid, still on stage, converse as they make their way to the palace.³

Scene I: having received the completed order from **Vulcan**, **Venus** catalogues her six new arrows, describing each one's function and the material of which each is comprised.

To help the reader keep track, here is a summary of the features of Cupid's brand new arrows:

Arrow #1 (lines 5-10): to be shot at husbands of beautiful wives, with the effect of causing them (the husbands) to suspect their wives' fidelity.

Arrow #2 (11-17): cause the victim to hate whomever he or she loves at the moment he or she is struck. **Venus intends this arrow to be shot at Sapho, which will cause her to hate Phao.**

Arrow #3 (18-25): cause the victim to suddenly possess a mature and faithful love for another. **Venus intends this arrow to be shot at Phao.**

Arrow #4 (26-41): cause a woman to become a flirt.

Arrow #5 (42-46): cause the victim to hate those who are actively pursuing him or her.

Arrow #6 (47-52): cause the victim to fall in love only with those outside of his or her rank or station in life.

Bevington notes that Lyly has creatively augmented traditional ancient mythology, in which Cupid only possessed two types of arrows, viz. gold and lead, with which he could cause his targets to fall in love and loathing respectively.

= ie. Vulcan: different stories in mythology assigned Cupid different fathers, including Mars, but never Vulcan.⁶
= weapons,¹ ie. the arrows.
= judgment.²

5-6: **This arrow...hen** = Pliny describes the *aegithus* as a type of hawk which is lame in one leg (10.9). Venus' suggestion that this raptor worries about his mate being unfaithful (**for fear of his hen**)³ is Lyly's invention, as is the *perillus* stone of line 7.³

9-10: **which will...brains** = the sense is that the cuckolded husbands will feel the horns growing on their foreheads as the agitation of suspicion heightens.

= the idea that the *steel* produced in *Lydia*, a state located in western Asia Minor on the Aegean Sea, was of superior quality, originated here with Lyly, and was borrowed by numerous succeeding authors.

12: causes its struck victim to hate whomever he or she loves the most.
= from a turtledove.

<p>14 a tigress. <u>Draw this up close to the head</u> at Sapho, that she may despise <u>where now she dotes</u>. <u>Good my boy</u>,</p>	<p>= ie. fire this arrow with great force; see the note at Act I.i.71. 15: where now she dotes = ie. Phao, with whom she is infatuated at present. Good my boy = ie. "my good lad": a poetic vocative expression, paralleling the commonly used "good my lord".</p>
<p>16 <u>gall</u> her on the side, that for Phao's love she may never sigh.</p>	<p>= penetrate (with this arrow);¹ <i>to gall with arrows</i> was a common collocation.</p>
<p>18 This arrow is feathered with the <u>phoenix'</u> wing, and headed with the eagle's bill: it maketh men passionate in desires, in love <u>constant</u>, and <u>wise in conveyance</u>,</p>	<p>= the phoenix was the well-known bird which lived for 500 years before being consumed by fire, after which it would rise from the ashes in a youthful state, and live its life all over again.</p>
<p>20 <u>melting, as it were, their fancies into faith</u>. This arrow, sweet child, and with as great aim as thou canst, must Phao be stricken <u>withal</u>, and cry softly to thyself in the very <u>loose</u>, "Venus"! Sweet Cupid, mistake me</p>	<p>20: constant = faithful. wise in conveyance = discreet in manner of expression,¹ or skilled in conducting courtship.⁶</p>
<p>22 <u>not; I will make a quiver for that by itself</u>. The fourth hath feathers of the peacock, but glued with the gum of <u>the myrtle tree</u>, headed with fine</p>	<p>= transforming playful attraction into a mature and loyal love. 23: withal = with. 23-24: cry softly...Venus = by calling out Venus' name as he releases (loose = release) the arrow, Cupid will cause his victim – Phao – to fall in love with Venus.</p>
<p>24 gold, and <u>fastened</u> with brittle <u>chrysocoll</u>. This shoot at <u>dainty</u> and coy ladies, at <u>amiable</u> and young nymphs: choose no other <u>white</u> but women, for this will work</p>	<p>= the myrtle tree was sacred to Venus.¹² 28: fastened = ie. the head is attached to the shaft. chrysocoll = ie. chrysocholla, a substance whose name means "gold-solder";¹ Pliny describes chrysocoll as a liquid which is found in mining shafts (33.26).</p>
<p>26 liking in their minds, but not love; <u>affability</u> in speech, but no <u>faith</u>; courtly favours to be mistresses over many, but constant to none; sighs to be fetched from</p>	<p>= fastidious.¹ = lovely.¹ 30: white = target: an archery term, referring to the white target at the center of a ring.² 30-35: this will work...eyes = a woman struck with this arrow will be turned into a flirt, charmed to enjoy men without loving them.</p>
<p>32 the lungs, not the heart; and tears to be <u>wrong out</u> with their fingers, not their eyes; secret laughing at</p>	<p>= geniality, friendliness.¹ 32: faith = constancy or loyalty in love. 32-33: courtly...to none = she will give her favours to many men, but will stick with no single one.</p>
<p>34</p>	<p>33-34: sighs...heart = a particularly clever contrast: there will be no genuine emotion behind her ostensible sighing out of love; her sighs will be strictly for show. 34-35: tears...eyes = ie. engaging in (manipulative) feigned weeping.⁶ wrong out = ie. wrung out, a common alternate form.</p>

36 men's pale looks and neat attire; open rejoicing at their
 own comeliness and men's courting. Shoot this arrow
 38 among the thickest of them, whose bosoms lie open
 because they would be stricken with it. And seeing
 40 men term women "Jupiter's fools", women shall make
 men "Venus' fools".
 42 This shaft is lead in the head, and whose feathers
 are of the night raven: a deadly and poisoned shaft,
 44 which breedeth hate only against those which sue
 for love. Take heed, Cupid, thou hit not Phao with
 46 this shaft, for then shall Venus perish.
 This last is an old arrow, but newly mended, the
 48 arrow which hit both Sapho and Phao, working only
 in mean minds an aspiring to superiors, and in high
 50 estates a stooping to inferiors. With this, Cupid, I
 am galled myself, till thou have galled Phao with the
 52 other.
 54 **Cupid.** I warrant you, I will cause Phao to languish in
 your love, and Sapho to disdain his.
 56 **Venus.** Go, loiter not, nor mistake your shaft.
 58
 [Exit Cupid.]
 60 Now, Venus, hast thou played a cunning part, though

36: *men's pale looks* = the *pale* countenances said to be possessed by men who pine away in love.
neat attire = their fine or elegant clothing (worn to impress the ladies).¹

37: *comeliness* = beauty.
men's courting = ie. the struck women enjoy the attention of men, without intending to consummate any single relationship.

38-39: *among...with it* = "into the densest crowd of those women who want to be struck by this arrow." The image is of a throng of women, each one pulling open her upper garments in the conventional pose of one who is asking to be pierced in the heart with an opponent's dagger or sword.

= ie. seeing that.

40: *men...fools* = ie. because so many women have been seduced by the lecherous Jupiter.⁶

40-41: *women shall...fools* = ie. by teasing and flirting with men, thus drawing them into falling in love, without any intention of returning their suitors' affections.

42-46: Cupid's lesser-known *lead-headed* arrows were said to produce hatred in their victims.

= ie. hence black.

44-45: *which breedeth...for love* = which will cause the victim to hate any suitor who pursues him or her.

45-46: *Take heed...perish* = if Cupid were to shoot this arrow at Phao, he would loathe Venus, who is in love with him: and this Venus could not bear!

= restored or refurbished.

48-50: *working...inferior* = here is an arrow which causes its victims to fall in love with those outside of their own societal status.

50-52: *With this...other* = in having fallen for the working-class Phao, Venus feels herself to have figuratively been struck with arrow #6; as such, she sees herself as vexed (*I am galled*) until Cupid strikes (*have galled*) Phao with arrow #3, by which Phao will fall in love with Venus!

= assure. = pine for.¹

57: Venus warns her mischievous son not to shoot the wrong arrows at the wrong persons!

loiter not = "waste no time", ie. "get going!"

61: *part* = role, as in a play.

61-62: *though not current* = perhaps meaning "though I am not being genuine", ie. her real self, or "though I am not engaging in acceptable behaviour", ie. "her conduct goes against law and custom" (Bevington, p. 291).⁶ In *Euphues*,

62 not current. – But why should Venus dispute of
64 unlawfulness in love, or faith in affection, being both
the goddess of love and affection, knowing there is as
little truth to be used in love, as there is reason? No,

66 sweet Phao, Venus will obtain because she is Venus.

Not thou, Jove, with thunder in thy hand, shalt take

68 him out of my hands. I have new arrows now for my
boy, and fresh flames at which the gods shall tremble,
if they begin to trouble me. But I will expect the event,
and tarry for Cupid at the forge.

[Exit.]

ACT V, SCENE II.

A Room in Sapho's Palace.

Enter Sapho, Cupid, and Mileta.

1 **Sapho.** What hast thou done, Cupid?

2
3 **Cupid.** That my mother commanded, Sapho.

4
5 **Sapho.** Methinks I feel an alteration in mind, and, as it
6 were, a withdrawing in myself of mine own affections.

8 **Cupid.** Then hath mine arrow his effect.

10 **Sapho.** I pray thee, tell me the cause.

12 **Cupid.** I dare not.

14 **Sapho.** Fear nothing: for if Venus fret, Sapho can

frown: thou shalt be my son – Mileta, give him some
16 sweetmeats. – Speak, good Cupid, and I will give thee
many pretty things.

18 **Cupid.** My mother is in love with Phao. She willed

Lyly described Venus as **current** in the former sense: "...with
as many inventions to make Venus current, as the ladies use
slights in Italy to make themselves counterfeit."

62-65: **But why...reason** = "but why am I debating the mer-
its of love – whether it is immoral (**unlawful**),¹ or whether
there can exist genuine faithfulness in lovers – when I am
the goddess of love, and am perfectly aware that much dis-
sembling goes on in the affairs of love?"

= ie. "possess you".

67: **Not thou** = ie. "not even thou".

with thunder in thy hand = Jupiter (aka **Jove**), as the god
of **thunder** and lightning, could strike a man or god down
with the latter.

= ie. await the outcome (of Cupid's assignment).

= wait.

Scene II: Cupid has completed the first part of his assign-
ment, striking Sapho with arrow #2, effacing her obsession
with Phao.

Entering Characters: on entering, Sapho sits on her throne.

= ie. that which.

= an abating of her love-sickness.

withdrawing = appears as **withstanding** in the B.L.
quarto, but emended as shown in the alternate quartos.

= its.

12: Cupid fears telling the queen what he has done; but
Sapho, still believing that Venus is on her side, interprets his
anxiety as a worry that his mother will punish him for his
actions.

= complains, or is vexed.²

15: **frown** = ie. at Venus, meaning she can handle the god-
dess.

15-16: **Mileta...sweetmeats** = Sapho bribes the boy-
god into spilling the beans by giving him candy.

sweetmeats = sugared fruits, confectionaries.¹

20	me to strike you with disdain of him, and him with desire of her.	
22		
24	Sapho. Oh, <u>spiteful Venus!</u> – Mileta, give him some of that. – What else, Cupid?	= Sapho is naturally upset with Venus, who had promised to help her at Act IV.i.32.
26	Cupid. I could <u>be even</u> with my mother, and so I will if I <u>shall</u> call you mother.	= ie. get even. = may.
28		
30	Sapho. Yea, Cupid, call me anything, so I may be even with her.	
32	Cupid. I have an arrow, with which if I strike Phao, it will cause him to <u>loathe only</u> Venus.	32-33: Cupid refers to arrow #5 (see the introductory note of Scene I above). loathe only = feel only hatred towards.
34		
36	Sapho. Sweet Cupid, strike Phao with it. Thou shalt sit in my lap: I will rock thee asleep, and feed thee with all these fine <u>knacks</u> .	= delicacies, but could also refer to knick-knacks. ¹ Christopher Marlowe, in his first play, <i>Dido, Queen of Carthage</i> , borrowed the idea of having Cupid sit on the lap of his female protagonist, but in that case, Cupid did so on Venus' orders.
38		
40	Cupid. I will <u>about it</u> .	= get to it.
42		
	[Exit Cupid.]	
44	Sapho. But come quickly again. – Ah, unkind Venus, is this thy promise to Sapho? But if I get Cupid from thee, I myself will be the queen of love. I will direct these arrows with better aim, and conquer mine own	46-47: conquer...modesty = ie. "regain control of my own emotions."
46		
48	affections with greater modesty. Venus' heart shall <u>flame</u> , and her love be as common as her <u>craft</u> . – Oh,	47-48: Venus'...craft = Sapho means she will drive Venus crazy by having Cupid ply her repeatedly with his golden arrows, so that she will be continuously consumed with love for others, such burning amorousness becoming as ubiquitous in her as is her constant scheming and deceit (craft). 48: flame = ie. burn uncontrollably.
	Mileta, time hath disclosed that which my <u>temperance</u>	49-50: time...kept in = finally, Sapho is ready to reveal the cause of her incapacity. temperance = self-control. ¹ kept in (line 50) = ie. kept undisclosed. ⁶
50	hath kept in; but <u>sith</u> I am rid of <u>the disease</u> , I will not be ashamed to confess the cause: I loved Phao, Mileta, a thing unfit for my <u>degree</u> , but forced by my desire.	= since. = ie. her love-sickness.
52		= social status, rank.
54	Mileta. Phao?	
56	Sapho. Phao, Mileta, of whom now Venus is enamoured.	
58		
60	Mileta. And do you love him still?	
	Sapho. No, I feel <u>relenting</u> thoughts, and reason not	61: relenting = abating. 61-62: reason...appetite = ie. she has mastered her

<p>62 yielding to appetite. Let Venus have him – no, she shall not have him. But here comes Cupid.</p>	<p>lustful desires (<i>appetite</i>).</p> <p>62-63: Let Venus...not have him = at first inclined to be generous, Sapho suddenly remembers that she has sent Cupid on a mission which will prevent Venus from obtaining Phao.</p>
<p>64</p> <p>66 [Re-enter Cupid, who sits in Sapho's lap.]</p>	<p>65: here we have a good example of the stage technique which may be called a <i>Compression of Time</i>: in the brief time it took to complete less than 20 lines of dialogue, Cupid was able to find Phao and shoot him with an arrow, and then return to Sapho's court.</p>
<p>68 How now my boy, hast thou done it?</p>	<p>= ranting abusively against.¹</p>
<p>68 Cupid. Yea, and left Phao <u>railing on</u> Venus, and</p>	<p>= we must remember that Cupid struck Phao with arrow #5, which caused him to turn to loathing only those women who were in love with him; since Sapho, previously struck by arrow #2, no longer was in love with Phao, Phao's longing for Sapho has remained undiminished.</p>
<p>70 cursing her name; <u>yet still sighing for Sapho</u>, and</p>	<p>= proclaiming.¹</p>
<p>72 <u>blazing</u> her virtues.</p>	<p>= repaid with such bad luck. = ie. "love you."</p>
<p>72 Sapho. Alas, poor Phao! thy extreme love should not be <u>requited with so mean a fortune</u>; thy fair face deserved greater favours. I cannot <u>love</u>: Venus hath hardened my heart.</p>	<p>Entering Character: we last saw Venus at the end of the previous scene, waiting at Vulcan's forge for Cupid to return after completing his mission. Impatient, she has come to the palace to search for her wayward son.</p>
<p>76</p> <p>78 [Enter Venus.]</p>	
<p>80 Venus. I marvel Cupid cometh not all this while. – How now, in Sapho's lap?</p>	
<p>82 Sapho. Yea, Venus, what say you to it? In Sapho's lap.</p>	
<p>84</p> <p>86 Venus. <u>Sir boy</u>, come hither.</p>	<p>= a mock-formal term of address, used when reprimanding a young lad.</p>
<p>88 Cupid. I will not.</p>	
<p>90 Venus. What now? Will <u>you</u> not! Hath Sapho made you so saucy?</p>	<p>90-91: Venus normally, and properly, uses thou when addressing Cupid, but with you, she signals a break in intimacy, a formal emotional distancing natural in a moment of anger.</p>
<p>92</p> <p>94 Cupid. I will be Sapho's son. I have, as you commanded, stricken her with a deep disdain of Phao; <u>and Phao</u>, as she <u>entreated</u> me, with a great <u>despite of</u> you.</p>	<p>= ie. "and I have struck Phao". = asked. = contempt for.</p>
<p>96</p> <p>98 Venus. <u>Unhappy wag</u>, what hast thou done? I will make thee repent it [in] every vein in thy heart.</p>	<p>= troublesome.¹ = mischievous boy.</p>
<p>100</p> <p>102 Sapho. Venus, be not <u>choleric</u>: Cupid is mine; he hath given me his arrows, and I will give him a new</p>	<p>= angry.</p>

104 bow to shoot in. You are not worthy to be the lady of
 106 love, that yield so often to the impressions of love.
 Immodest Venus, that to satisfy the unbridled thoughts
 108 of thy heart, transgresses so far from the stay of thine
 honour. – How sayest thou, Cupid, wilt thou be with
 110 me?
Cupid. Yes.
 112 **Sapho.** Shall not I be on earth the goddess of
affections?
 114 **Cupid.** Yes.
 116 **Sapho.** Shall not I rule the fancies of men, and lead
 118 Venus in chains like a captive?
 120 **Cupid.** Yes.
 122 **Sapho.** It is a good boy!
 124 **Venus.** What have we here? You the goddess of love?
 126 And you her son, Cupid? I will tame that proud heart,
 128 else shall the gods say, they are not Venus' friends. –
 And as for you, sir boy, I will teach you how to run
 away: you shall be stripped from top to toe, and
 whipped with nettles, not roses. I will set you to blow
 130 Vulcan's coals, not to bear Venus' quiver; I will handle
 you for this gear. – Well, I say no more. But as for the
 132 new mistress of love (or, lady, I cry you mercy, I think
 you would be called a goddess), you shall know what
 134 it is to usurp the name of Venus! I will pull those
 plumes and cause you to cast your eyes on your feet,
 136 not your feathers: your soft hair will I turn to hard
 138 bristles, your tongue to a sting, and those alluring eyes
 to unluckiness, in which, if the gods aid me not, I will
 140 curse the gods!
Sapho. Venus, you are in a vein answerable to your
 142 vanity, whose high words neither become you, nor fear
 me. But let this suffice: I will keep Cupid in despite of

= ie. with.
 = deep stamp.
 = ie. uncontrolled (lascivious) thoughts.
 106-7: **stay of thine honour** = restraining effect the desire
 to remain honourable should have on her behaviour.
 = ie. remain.
 = love.
 117-8: **lead...captive** = a figurative enslavement, since
 Sapho, with Cupid's help, expects to lead Venus repeatedly
 into falling desperately in love.
 = ie. Sapho's heart.
 126: before Venus' fellow-deities forsake her friendship.
 129: **nettles** = any of several stinging plants.¹
 129-130: **set you...coals** = ie. "put you to work in
 Vulcan's smithy".
 130: **bear Venus' quiver** = ie. be Venus' companion in
 spreading love around the world.
handle = deal with.¹
 = business, matter.
 132-3: **or, lady...goddess** = Venus sarcastically begs
 Sapho's forgiveness for addressing her incorrectly!
 134: **name** = ie. title.
 134-5: **pull those plumes** = common metaphor for taking
 another down a notch, ie. reducing their pride. The metaphor
 ties in with the allusion to the **peacock** in the next clause.
 135-6: **to cast...feathers** = to act humbly or modestly. The
 allusion is to the peacock, who was said to have been given
 ugly feet in order to check its arrogant pride in its feathers.⁵
 137-8: **those alluring...unluckiness** = Venus threatens to
 remove Sapho's attractiveness to men.⁶
 141-2: **you are...vanity** = punning, "your foolishness
 (**vanity**) is the cause of your present mood (**vein**).
 142-3: **whose high...fear me** = "and your threats neither
 are appropriate for a goddess, nor frighten (**fear**) me."
 = ie. the following response. = ie. spite.

144 you, and yet with the content of the gods.

146 **Venus.** Will you? Why then, we shall have pretty

148 gods in heaven, when you take gods prisoners on

150 earth. Before I sleep, you shall both repent, and find

152 what it is but to think unreverently of Venus. – Come,

154 Cupid: she knows not how to use thee. Come with me,

156 you know what I have for you: will you not?

158 **Cupid.** Not I!

160 **Venus.** Well, I will be even with you both, and that

162 shortly.

164 [Exit Venus.]

166 **Sapho.** Cupid, fear not, I will direct thine arrows

168 better. Every rude ass shall not say he is in love. It is a

170 toy made for ladies, and I will keep it only for ladies.

172 **Cupid.** But what will you do for Phao?

174 **Sapho.** I will wish him fortunate. This will I do for

176 Phao, because I once loved Phao: for never shall it be

178 said that Sapho loved to hate, or that out of love she

180 could not be as courteous, as she was in love

182 passionate. – Come, Mileta, shut the door.

184 [Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE III.

Before Sybilla's Cave.

Enter Phao to Sybilla in the cave.

1 **Phao.** [Aside] Go to Sybilla. Tell the beginning of

2 thy love, and the end of thy fortune. – And lo, how

4 happily she sitteth in her cave. – Sybilla?

6 **Syb.** Phao, welcome. What news?

8 **Phao.** Venus, the goddess of love, I loathe: Cupid

10 caused it with a new shaft. Sapho disdaineth me:

12 Venus caused it for a new spite. Oh, Sybilla, if Venus

14 be unfaithful in love, where shall one fly for truth? She

16 useth deceit; is it not then likely she will dispense with

18 subtlety? And being careful to commit injuries, will

= assent.

= capable, robust, or the like: Venus is sarcastic.

= disrespectfully.

= employ or treat.

160-2: Sapho plans to be more selective than is Venus with respect to whom Cupid will shoot in the future.

= good luck.

= ie. no longer being in love with someone.

= with her final command and stately exit, Sapho has at last fully regained her royal demeanor and dignity.⁶

= ie. "tell her".¹

= ie. good fortune.

= luckily.

= ie. arrow #5.

= out of a newly-born spite. = ie. if even Venus.

= fidelity, faithfulness.¹

11-13: *is it not...revenge them* = Phao, worried for his safety, believes that Venus will be unlikely to forgive and forget this whole affair, and may even avenge the injuries to her pride.

subtlety = craft, cunning.²

being careful = fervently acting.¹

not be careless (line 13) = ie. be eager.

14 she not be careless to revenge them? I must now fall
from love to labour, and endeavour with mine oar to
get a fare, not with my pen to write a fancy. Loves are

16 but smokes, which vanish in the seeing and yet hurt
whilest they are seen. –

18 A ferry, Phao? No, the stars cannot call it a worsen

fortune. Range rather over the world, forswear

20 affections, entreat for death. – Oh, Sapho, thou hast
Cupid in thine arms, I in my heart; thou kissest him for
22 sport, I must curse him for spite. Yet will I not curse
him, Sapho, whom thou kissest. – This shall be my
24 resolution: wherever I wander, to be as I were ever
kneeling before Sapho, my loyalty unspotted, though
26 unrewarded. With as little malice will I go to my grave,
as I did lie withal in my cradle. My life shall be spent
28 in sighing and wishing, the one for my bad fortune,
the other for Sapho's good.

30 **Syb.** Do so, Phao, for destiny calleth thee as well from
32 Sicily as from love. Other things hang over thy head,
which I must neither tell, nor thou inquire. And so,
34 farewell.

36 [Exit Sybilla.]

38 **Phao.** Farewell, Sybilla, and farewell, Sicily. –
Thoughts shall be thy food, and in thy steps shall be
40 printed behind thee, that there was none so loyal left
behind thee. – Farewell, Syracuse, unworthy to harbour
42 faith; and when I am gone, unless Sapho be here,
unlikely to harbour any.

44 [Exit Phao.]

FINIS.

THE EPILOGUE.

1 They that tread in a maze, walk oftentimes in one
2 path, and at the last come out where they entered in.
We fear we have led you all this while in a labyrinth
4 of conceits, divers times hearing one device, and have

13-15: ***I must...fancy*** = Phao must give up his love-making,
and return to work.

= Fairholt suggests "love sonnet".

= ie. illusory.

18: ***A ferry, Phao?*** = Bevington turns this clause, which
appears in the quartos as a statement, into a question, which
Phao immediately answers.

18-19: ***the stars...fortune*** = the *stars* are alluded to in
their believed-role of determining the fate of individuals.

19: ***Range*** = wander.

19-20: ***forswear affections*** = abandon the pursuit of love.
= seek out or beg for.

= amusement; note the wordplay of ***for sport*** and ***for spite***.

= ie. remaining faithful to Sapho. = pure, morally untainted.

= with.

= ie. sighing in regret for his miserable fate.

31-34: Sybilla cannot reveal to Phao what his future has
in store for him – except that it will carry him away from
Sicily.

36: stage direction added by Daniel, so that Phao delivers the
play's final speech alone on stage. Bevington has her enter
"into her cave."

39-41: ***Thoughts...thee*** = Phao is addressing himself.

= ie. imprinted.

1-14 (below): Lyly takes up the first 14 lines of the Epilogue
to basically apologize for presenting a play in which the
situation the characters find themselves in at the end is
exactly the same one as they were in when the play began.

4: ***conceits*** = trifles.¹

6 now brought you to an end where we first began:
which wearisome travail you must impute to the
8 necessity of the history, as Theseus did his labour to
the art of the labyrinth.

10 There is nothing causeth such giddiness, as going
in a wheel. Neither can there anything breed such
tediousness, as hearing many words uttered in a small
12 compass. But if you accept this dance of a fairy in a
circle, we will hereafter at your wills frame our fingers
14 to all forms.

16 And so we wish every one of you a thread to lead
you out of the doubts, wherewith we leave you
entangled: that nothing be mistaken by our rash
18 oversights, nor misconstrued by your deep insights.

4: *divers...device* = ie. seeing the same ideas repeatedly reused.

6-7: *which wearisome...history* = the plot itself is to blame for Her Majesty's being forced to endure the tiresome play which in the end led to no change in circumstance.

6: *travail* = means both "journey" and "effort".

7-8: *as Theseus...labyrinth* = *Theseus* too ended his mission in the labyrinth by finding himself right back at its entrance. The analogy is not quite apropos. as the Greek hero had actually killed the Minotaur after he reached the center of the labyrinth, so that his situation had actually changed quite drastically by the time he exited. See the note at Act II.i.58 for the full story.

9: *giddiness* = dizziness.¹

9-10: *going in a wheel* = travelling in a circle. The analogy at lines 12-13 of a *fairy dancing in a circle* similarly suggests a lack of substantive progress, or change in circumstances.

12: *compass* = space.

13-14: *we will...forms* = a promise to give the audience what it wants in the future, if they do not respond too badly to the present production.

17-18: *that nothing...insights* = as he did in the Prologue at Court, Lyly asks his viewers not to overinterpret what they have seen as a comment on the goings-on in the queen's court.⁶

FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the play correspond as follows:

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